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and
A Tale of



for
The Revolution.

Académie des Dames Ursulines.

PRIX.

Examen

Décerné à M^{lle} V. Donnelly

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SR. M. ALPHONSE,
Supérieure.

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THE PRIDE OF LEXINGTON.

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PRIDE OF LEXINGTON:

A Tale of the American Revolution.

BY

WILLIAM SETON,

Author of "Romance of the Charter Oak," "The Pioneers," etc., etc.

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THE PRIDE OF LEXINGTON:

A TALE OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION.

CHAPTER I.

ONE April evening, in the year 1775, three persons might have been seen walking together across a stony field half a mile south of the village of Lexington, Massachusetts.

The one in the middle was a lass of nineteen or twenty years of age, with plump rosy cheeks, a nose not classic, it is true, yet delicately formed and none the less beautiful for its gentle turn towards the sky, and jet black hair of extraordinary length, which now freed from the hood and with the setting sun full on it, shone with a lustre peculiar—at least so thought many an admiring swain—to the hair of Jane M'Crea. Her nature you might read at a glance: it was a joyful one. She was, as the saying is, as full of fun as a cricket, and when she laughed, it was music like the song of the lark. At husking parties she could outdance any other girl; there was not in the township a horse too wild for her to ride; while at the turkey-matches held on Thanksgiving day, when the best rifle shots assembled to try their skill, her true eye and steady hand had more than once carried off the prize. At the same time Jane could do other things besides laugh and

frolic : she knew that there was a time for everything, and it was generally acknowledged that no better scholar had ever studied in the village schoolhouse.

But at the moment when we introduce her to the reader her countenance has lost its happy expression and her blue eyes are moistened with tears. Her companions like herself are silent. Aaron Knox, the broad-shouldered man of eight-and-twenty, with beetling brow and sunburnt face, who walks upon her left, is trying hard to meet his fate without showing his unfathomable grief—for beneath yonder pine tree, a few minutes ago, he had asked her to be his bride and she had refused ; while David Jones, Aaron's best friend, albeit rival suitor, cannot smile and feel as a fortunate wooer ought. His heart, it is true, throbs as it never throbbed before at the touch of the maiden's hand ; but David, too, is sad. Can it be that he perceives in his hour of triumph the shadow of coming events ?

Presently they reached an opening in the fence which ran along the highway to Boston, and halted. "So you must leave me?" spoke the young woman, gazing mournfully at her betrothed. "The strife is approaching—you see it—I see it—we all see it—the horizon is very dark ; but must you go so soon?"

"What would I not give to stay!" sighed the youth, now pressing her hand in both of his, while his voice quivered. "But my heart tells me the colonies are in the wrong. To remain, I would have to fold my arms and appear a coward. My father served England all his life. He is dead. But I have not forgotten the promise which I made him : I shall tread in his footsteps and join the British army." Then addressing his friend, "Aaron," he continued, "you alone among the inhabitants of Lexington know my history—how I was driven from my home in Canada by a cruel stepfather ; you found me barefooted and ragged, and you clothed me ; you took me to school ; we worked together, we played together, and God willed it that at last we should fall in love with the same girl. But our

friendship has not been like other friendships—there was no jealousy between us, was there, Aaron?”

“None,” replied the latter, and in his deep voice there was a ring of truth which you could not mistake. “And I am glad she is to marry the best friend I have on earth. Would that we saw alike in political matters!”

Here there was a brief pause, during which the girl sobbed. “Well, God knows,” continued David, “I am sincere. Yet not more so than you. Curse these troubles! To drive us into arms against each other. Curse them! But I’ll hurry away to a distant field of action, where no bullet from my rifle can reach you. I’ll go to Ticonderoga. And while I am gone, let me again ask may I confide Jenny to your care?”

“I have already answered that question,” returned the other. “Through thick and thin, come what may, Aaron Knox will keep her safe for you. I vow it. But—” here the speaker turned his piercing eyes on the young woman, while at the same time a pathetic look stole over his face, as if he felt what a trying charge he was taking on himself, and yearned to be rid of it—“but does Miss M’Crea really want to have me for her guardian?”

“Yes, Aaron, and where could I find a better one?” was the gentle response. “Have I not known you from my childhood? you are kindness itself; the soul of honor. True, I may seem well enough able to take care of myself, but if the good widow with whom I am living were to marry again, and if my brother went off to sea as he often talks of doing, I would rather have you to lean upon until these troubles are over, and David returned.”

“Then take her, Aaron,” and as David Jones spoke he placed Jane’s other hand in that of his friend, who, with a countenance which betrayed but faintly the agony of his soul, accepted the trust; and as he looked deep into the girl’s blue eyes, there was even a sweet smile on his lips. Then turning he walked a few steps to the south side of a rock where the first spring vio-

lets were blooming, and where a few days before he had gathered a bunch for Jane.

As soon as he was out of sight. David clasped the girl to his breast, and so with heart throbbing against heart, but their lips not uttering a word, they remained for more than a minute. Oh, precious, golden link in the chain of Time ! But golden, precious as it was, it had to break : it was already broken when Knox re-appeared with the wild-flowers. "Stay ! David," he cried, for the latter was walking away. "Stay ! do not depart without an embrace."

"Yes," said the youth, in a tremulous voice, and retracing his steps, "let us embrace."

And they did ; then Knox gave him the violets, and on one of them was glistening a drop like dew—perhaps it was a tear which Aaron had shed.

"'Tis a small gift," said the latter.

"But precious," returned David. "I know what it means ; true, true friend."

In another moment the youth was hastening from them on his way to Ticonderoga.

Knox gazed after him with folded arms and an expression on his face so intense as to be almost painful. You might have thought that he was striving to look into futurity. Perhaps he was. If the approaching war proved long and bloody, would he and David both live through it ? Or would—would David perish, and Jane M'Crea be left a drooping flower, yet lovely still, and not unwilling to become the bride of him whom she had once rejected ?

While Knox stood watching the retreating figure of his friend, the young woman buried her face in her hands and thus remained until he told her that David was out of sight. Then in a low but earnest voice, "God bless him," said Aaron, "and spare him to come back and marry my ward. But don't take it so hard, Jenny ; come, come." With this he led her off towards the village.

By this time the sun was below the horizon, the robin was singing his evening song, and the cows which

belonged to the widow M'Neil were lowing and wondering why Jane did not come to milk them. But the girl paid no heed to the hour, her ear was deaf to the song of the bird, and the cows were left to low and wonder what was the matter.

"The Ancient walks brisk for one of his age," spoke Knox, when they had got about half way home, and pointing to an old man who was coming towards them across a field on the right.

"Yes, Josiah Woodbury will soon be a hundred," said Jane, gazing at the figure approaching, and who with his stooping form, hoary locks, and the scythe hanging across his shoulder, might have been taken for Father Time. "What a dear old soul he is. How I'll miss him!"

As she spoke she thrust her hand into her pocket and drew out a piece of calamus root.

"Yes he can't worry through many more years," said Knox. "But if you were to die, how he'd miss you! You're his idol. See how his wrinkled face brightens as he recognizes you. What sharp eyes for one of his age!"

On came the Ancient, and in another moment he was in the road stretching out his shrivelled hand for the bit of calamus root, of which the girl always kept a good supply for him.

"It's early to do any mowing," spoke Knox patting his shoulder. "But if you've any work of that kind, why not let me do it?"

"Thanks, thanks," returned Mr. Woodbury, "you're ever a willin' lad, but—" here his voice faltered while his eyes turned towards the young woman, "but it's work I must do myself. Jenny, you know."

"Ah, yes, I know," and as Jane spoke she made Knox a sign to drop the subject.

"Well, any news?" pursued her guardian, after the old man had chewed for a moment the piece of root, then wiped off a tear which was trickling down his weather-beaten nose.

"Well, there is. Tisn't an hour since Harry

M'Crea told me he had seen a party of British officers riding along the road, and by the way they stared there was mischief in them.* I tell you what, we must sleep to-night with one eye open."

"Aye, that we must," said Knox. "And don't you think 'twould be wise for Mr. Hancock and Mr. Adams to quit town as soon as possible? Being members of the Provincial Congress, they are particularly obnoxious to General Gage, and it wouldn't surprise me if he sent troops at any moment to arrest them."

"Yes, better for 'em to go. But I'm afraid the Reverend Jonas Clark wouldn't listen to it. He thinks his house is the safest place for 'em to hide."

"Well, there's a back door to it, if the worst comes to the worst," pursued Knox. "And to-night I and some others 'll keep a sharp watch."

"And there's a full moon," said the Ancient, "which will please my Jenny, for if there's a fight she'll want to see the whole of it, won't you?"

The young woman, although he was gazing affectionately at her, made no response. Her thoughts at this moment were not of Lexington, nor of the danger which threatened Hancock and Adams. Her soul's eye was following her betrothed; she had scarcely even heard the old man's words. "And yet," she exclaimed, suddenly clasping her hands, just as Mr. Woodbury was about to ask the cause of her silence, "and yet I will stand by my country!"

"Why, who ever doubted that?" said the Ancient, a little puzzled by her speech, and the quick flush which crimsoned her brow. "I ought to call you my powder horn. You've talked so much to me of late about defending our liberties, that in spite of my years I feel as young and full of fight as anybody." Then lowering his voice, "but, Jenny, how'll David take sides? From what I heard him say last week in the tavern, I fear he's shaky. Do you think he'll join the British?"

* Heath's Memoirs p. 11. Bradford I. p. 370 for mention of this reconnaissance.

At this question the girl's eyes dropped to the earth and she gave a sigh, while Knox hastened to change the subject of conversation and began talking about the mess of trout which he had caught that morning in Wild-cat Run; and Josiah Woodbury, who in former days had been very fond of angling, listened without again opening his lips until they were at Buckman's tavern.

This was a two story wooden building on the north side of Lexington Green, and which for twenty years and more had been kept as a place of public entertainment by one Ebenezer Buckman. This worthy man died eighteen months before the opening of our narrative, leaving behind him neither wife nor child, and had bequeathed the Ordinary, together with five acres of land, to Mrs. M'Neil, a widow on the shady side of forty, and whom rumor declared Ebenezer had entertained the most serious intention of marrying when Death came to interrupt his plans.

The signboard, which this evening was swinging to and fro with a dismal creak, was considered by everybody the finest work of art in the township, and never failed to bring the Ancient to an admiring halt whenever he went by. It was painted by Jane M'Crea, and represented a scene at a husking-party in Hartford, Connecticut—Mr. Woodbury's native place—which he had once vividly described to her, although at the time it occurred he was only twelve years of age.* On one side stood a fat jovial individual with a long rod stuck into his boot, and the bunch of feathers at the end showed that it was the instrument which tythingmen used in the good old Puritan days, to tickle the noses of the women who fell asleep at meeting. Opposite him, and as near the edge of the board as possible, as if he were trying to back out of view, stood a tall, cadaverous figure, who by the grimace he was making was evidently loath to taste the liquor which the other offered him. The corners of his mouth were drawn ever so far down, while his eyes were rolled ever so high

* See "Romance of the Charter Oak."

up, and dangling from his pocket was a miniature ducking-stool. At the foot of the signboard the young artist had put these words :

“ LIFE’S BUT A JOURNEY, LIVE WELL ON THE ROAD.”

After gazing on it a moment Josiah Woodbury entered the inn by a side door, while Knox and Jane M’Crea remained conversing on the porch.

“ I’d better leave you now and go home and get supper,” said Aaron presently. “ Mother must be wondering what keeps me so late. If I hear any news, I’ll let you know at once.”

“ Do. But here comes Harry ; he must have something to tell.”

The youth who was approaching with quick, elastic step and rifle resting in the hollow of his arm, was a year older than his sister, and resembled her very little. His eye instead of being blue like hers, was dark and restless and seemed to be ever flashing at something. He had, ’tis true, a kind heart, but this was more than counterbalanced by an ungovernable temper, and he had quarreled with everybody except Jane and Aaron Knox. The former could calm him by a sign of her finger, while the latter exercised a control over him which astonished people. He had but to place his hand on Harry M’Crea’s shoulder to make him do almost anything.

“ So you have seen the enemy ?” exclaimed Aaron as the youth stepped up.

“ Aye, that I have, and after Mr. Woodbury left me I saw another party larger than the first. But I stared at them as hard as they stared at me.”

“ Well, what do you suppose they were after—so far from Boston ?”

“ Reconnoitering, Aaron, reconnoitering. Depend on it they’re going to try and capture the powder which the Provincial Congress has stored in Concord.”

“ And cage John Hancock and Samuel Adams,” said Knox.

"But you'll keep a bright lookout—won't you?" interrupted Jane, addressing her guardian. "You and brother watch all to-night until morning, and even then don't go off to your work till you're quite certain there is no danger."

"Trust us to do our duty," spoke Harry. "But there is one living here that I don't feel easy about. He has lived in Lexington pretty nigh seven years and yet has no love for the place. David Jones is my enemy, for he is the enemy of my country; and, Jenny, I'm going to put a stop to his hanging around your skirts."

"Brother," spoke the young woman, her pale face and eyes red with weeping adding force to the sad tone of her voice, "brother, you must not hate David, for you cannot do it without hating me."

The youth's lip curled an instant and he started back. Then endeavoring to master the feeling of indignation and wrath which almost took away the power of speech, "Sister," he exclaimed, "what do you mean? Did I understand your words? Have you taken the step which I asked you not to take? Have you given your hand to David Jones?"

"Harry," interrupted Knox, with a tremor in his voice which was quite unusual, "I beseech you keep silent. Do not speak thus to Jane—your only sister—who loves you dearly."

"And whom it seems I must hate," returned the youth bitterly. "But never mind. It shall never come to pass, never!"

"Harry—my brother—for God's sake—"

But he would not wait to listen to Jane's supplication. He would not turn back even for Aaron Knox. "No," he muttered as he hastened down the village street, "it shall not be, never, never!"

"Stop, Jane, stop," said Knox, who saw that she wanted to follow him. "Let him go. He is bent on fighting David, but the latter you know is not at my house this evening—he is out of harm's way."

"Oh yes—true—he is safe for the present. But I

must make Harry promise to pick no quarrel when he does find him. They may meet some of these days."

"Well there's time enough for that. Leave it to me. And now stop trembling and go in to Mrs. M'Neil, who doubtless is in a miff because you didn't milk the cows for her this evening."

With this she bade him good night and went into the house.

Let us here inform the reader that the dame to whom Ebenezer Buckman had bequeathed this Ordinary (and who gave, by the way, full as much satisfaction to the public as he himself had done) was no relative of Jane M'Crea, but had been an intimate friend of her mother's, and when the latter died, had insisted that Harry and his sister should take up their abode with her, at least until Mr. M'Crea—who had joined what was known as the Susquehannah company and gone West to prepare a new home—should send for his children.

But Mr. M'Crea was killed by the Indians at Wyoming in 1763, and the good woman having no family of her own, had ever since provided a home for the orphans.

Jane, however, was no incumbrance, and helped in many ways keep up the popularity of the tavern, while Harry cultivated the five acres of land with skill and industry, and despite a temperament which inclined him to rove, had remained, thus far, faithfully by his sister.

Josiah Woodbury—better known as the Ancient—had likewise received a home at the Ordinary, and for this he was indebted to Jane M'Crea. "No," she said, one autumn day, five years before our story opens, "no, he shall not go to the poorhouse." And with this she led the old man—who being no longer able to earn a living was on his way to dwell with the paupers—into Mrs. M'Neil's snug cottage at the other end of the village. And when the latter moved to her present abode, Jane took Mr. Woodbury with her.

His apartment was next to hers, and the windows of both looked out on a small garden with a row of bee-hives at the further end, and beyond the hives lay a meadow which Harry M'Crea had already ploughed up for corn, and beyond the furrows the landscape rose gradually into a hill on top of which stood seven pines where the girl and the Ancient often went to sit, for he was fond of listening to the murmuring sound which came from the trees. "It makes me think of Phebe," he would say, "of dear Phebe."

Jane had furnished his room as snugly as possible, and the morning-glories which were sown at the corner of the house had been made to creep all round his window, and she had done this because she once heard him say, "Phebe loved morning-glories."

The rickety chair beside his bed, albeit it creaked and groaned whenever he sat in it—as if lamenting that in its old age it was not sent up into the lumber room where it might die in peace—had been adorned with a coat of blue paint, and a soft cushion hid its bottom, which three generations had almost worn away. She had often wanted to hang a mirror on the wall. But this he never would allow, and for a strange reason—one which always caused the young woman, who had inherited from her mother a deep vein of superstition—to approach the closet at the foot of his bed with a feeling of awe.

"I have a horror of mirrors," said Mr. Woodbury one day, when she was pressing him earnestly to let her hang one up. "You must know that many years ago, 'twas the night when I was watching by Phebe's body—poor Phebe! the following week we were to have been married—I happened to look at myself in a glass, which her mother had given her and which had once belonged to Cotton Mather, who found it among the cast-off effects of a witch. And what think you I saw? Oh I'll never forget it! By the flickering lamplight I looked and beheld an old, old man with wrinkles on his face and a few white hairs scattered over his head. Who was it? I didn't know then, I

know now. It was myself--myself as I am to-day ! Mirrors are sometimes prophetic. Folks may think that my nerves had got shaken by Phebe's death and that my imagination deceived me. Perhaps—but still it is possible that I was not deceived. We are surrounded by mysteries, even as in the days when Belshazzar saw the fingers of a man's hand write his fate upon the wall. And now you know why I will have no mirror, and why—much as I loved Phebe Reed—I keep the one which belonged to her hidden in the closet."

But in the girl's chamber was a very large one, so large that she could almost view herself in it at full length, and though she was not at all vain, she liked to stand before it, for beautiful young life is fond of contemplating itself. And certainly, as she combed her hair by the glass on spring mornings, while the west wind came in through the open window bringing a rose for each of her cheeks, she was a rare picture of loveliness ; and no wonder that the wrens, which year after year built their nests under the eaves of the house, were fond of perching on the window-sill to look at her.

But, as we have remarked, Jane was not vain : If she knew that she was beautiful, she was very humble about it to other girls among whom she had not a single enemy, and they were all as willing as the young men to call her the Pride of Lexington.

On her table was a Bible, a copy of Shakespeare, and a volume of Jonathan Edwards' sermons ; likewise a few handfuls of calamus root, and a box of paints ; and the pictures hanging around the room, as well as the sign board of the Ordinary, show that the young artist has made good use of the lessons given her by a Polish refugee, who, until within the last month, boarded with the widow M'Neil.

Among the pictures was one of a youth with light, curly hair and an expression of fun on his face which made you smile and feel happy as you gazed at it. This she considered her master-piece, and her eyes

rested upon it oftener than on any of the others. But this evening she turned towards it more fondly than ever before, and her bosom heaved. "David, come back to me," she sighed, pressing her lips to the portrait, "dear boy, come back soon."

She had hardly breathed this prayer when the door opened and Mrs. M'Neil entered. "Why, Jenny, where have you been since noontime?" exclaimed the dame, who had, by the way, a fearful squint, which accorded well with her harsh, masculine voice. "I blowed the horn but you didn't come, and this evening I had to milk the cows myself, and what's more, I was obliged to ask Billy Smith to attend to the bar while I was away, and—and—oh, Jenny, why did you treat me so? Everything goes wrong when you're not here?"

"Well, pardon me this once," said Jane, keeping her eyes on the floor, for she did not want the widow to see her tears. "It shan't happen again."

"But you don't answer my question; where were you? with David? And what, may I ask, ails him? I spied him a while ago, crossing the lots as if he were in a great hurry, and when I called he wouldn't even look round. He may be doing a foolish thing to side with the British, but still he's a good youth, and if you've quarrelled with him for that, you were wrong."

"Yes, I have been with David Jones," replied the young woman, now looking boldly at the widow. "But quarrel with him! no, no indeed! I am his betrothed!"

"Oh! really! well now that is news," pursued the other, advancing and rubbing her hands. "Is it a fact? A fixed fact?"

"Yes. And to the end I will remain faithful to him. Yet in the province of Massachusetts there is not a truer American than Jane M'Crea."

"I believe you, child; and I'm glad of the choice you have made. David was always a pet of mine. But Knox—how does he take it? Aaron adores you; I hardly think he's a christian—he's a pagan when he

gets talking about you. Why last summer I saw him, gazing ever so long at your footprints by the mill pond. 'Twas the day you waded in after lilies. Ha! he didn't know I was peeping at him from behind the door of the mill."

"Aaron is my guardian," continued Jane. "David has confided me to him until he returns, for you must know that my betrothed has gone away from Lexington. But these troubles will blow over; David will soon come back; I could not have a more honest guardian. But now let me beg you not to say a word about this to anybody. Keep it a secret. My brother already knows it, but I don't want it to go further. I shall not even tell it to the Ancient." Here she pressed her hand to her forehead with a weary look, while the other promised to hold her tongue on the subject.

"Well I've got a secret for you to keep," said Mrs. M'Neil presently. "It's about William Smith, and afore we go down to supper—'twon't take but a minute—I'll tell you what it is. If he isn't the tiptop of impudence then I'm not John M'Neil's widow!"

"You must know," she went on, after drawing a long breath, "that he's been wanting to marry me these six months past. I've tried my best to get rid of him; but no use. All men are alike; they can't let us women alone. Well, this evening Mr. Smith dropped in—just to get a match, he said, to light his pipe—and I like a fool asked if he wouldn't attend to any traveller that might come along while I went off to milk the cows. I told him what spare-rooms there were and likewise gave him the key of the wine closet. Now, how I came to do all this I can't tell, unless a crazy spirit got into me, for I never meant to give Mr. Smith any hope. Well, away I went after the cows, milked 'em—thought there was an end of it. But Lord, wasn't I green! Mr. Smith pressed his hand on his breast—just over where the heart lies—and gave me such a look! I think I've seen the same expression in calves. And then he beckoned me into the sitting-room and in spite of my misgivings I followed him. Oh, Jenny, we

women are altogether too good-natured. There must have been two crazy spirits in me instead of one. Well, after closing the door, we sat down face to face, then throwing his quid of tobacco away, 'Mrs. M'Neil,' he began; 'of course I needn't expound what my feelings are towards you. They've been a risin' like the tide—up, up, up; and they ha'n't never knowed any ebb; and at last I'm ripplin' over and—' Here I took advantage of a choking in his throat to speak out. 'Mr Smith,' says I, 'may our friendship never break, but—' 'Nay,' he exclaimed, suddenly lifting his hand, 'there can be friendship 'tween man and man, but none 'tween man and woman. It may seem like friendship, but it's a counterfeit article, and always ends in you know what—the woman changing her name, or the man drowning himself!' Here he stopped to take breath, and I might have quit the room, but I didn't. There I sat like a stone in a churchyard. Really, Jenny, there must have been three crazy spirits in me instead of two.

"At last says I 'Mr. Smith, do you expect me to change my name for your'n? M'Neil for Smith?'

"'Well,' says he—and if this didn't beat all!—'a rose by any other name will'—there he stuck, grew red as a turkey gobbler in the face, and I, like a fool, was going to help him on, when he concluded—'will smell just the same!'

"This put the capstone on my 'roil' and I jumped up. 'Mr. William Smith,' says I, 'I've stood this talk about long enough and now I'll speak out. I will take you on one condition, and that is that you prove yourself a hero in the coming struggle with England.' And considering what a coward he is, 'twas the likeliest way of shutting up his mouth. But Lord! It didn't startle him one bit. He thumped his breast and told me to get my weddin' gown ready: he'd win me or die a soldier's death. 'And if there's a fight to-night,' says I, 'shall I call you?'—for you know he's a trifle deaf and might make that an excuse for shirking the fray.

“‘By all means,’ says he, ‘you know that I sleep in the old log cabin close by your garden fence.’

“With this, he left the room, after first squeezing my hand and vowing that he’d prove himself a hero.”

“Poor fellow!” sighed Jane M’Crea, a few minutes later, when she knocked at Mr. Woodbury’s door to tell him to come to supper, “poor fellow! He may go now and get himself killed. And yet, I can’t blame Mrs. M’Neil. If there is one thing more than another a woman likes to see in a man, ’tis courage, and if Mr. Smith is really such a coward, no wonder she won’t marry him.”

At the very time the widow was narrating the above to Jane M’Crea, Smith was in his cabin, seated on a bushel basket scratching his head.

“I’ve been in tight places afore,” he soliloquized, “but never in quite such a tight one as this. That she’ll call me if there’s trouble to-night there can be no doubt—if only for the fun of seeing me shot at. What a termagant she is! But then she has her good ‘pints:’ she’s got no husband and she owns some property; while I ought to have somebody to darn my stockings and rub me when I get the ‘rheumaticks.’”

Presently he burst into a laugh. “And she tried to cheer me up by saying, ‘’tis noble to die for one’s country:’ Ha, ha, ha! I’d rather live for it ten times over. Ha, ha, ha!”

At length, rising from the basket, “yes,” he continued, “that’s just what I’ll do. It’s a desperate thing and if she ever finds it out I’ll have to quit the township. But I’ll try it; yes I’ll put dirt in the key-hole of the side door and front door, so that she’ll not be able to open either of ’em; and then she’ll have to ‘holler’ to me from the window, and to-morrow I’ll swear I slept like a top. Ha, ha!”

While he was thus talking with himself and arranging his plans, and while Jane M’Crea, Mr. Woodbury and the widow M’Neil were partaking of their evening repast, Knox and Harry M’Crea were conversing together, at the home of the former about David Jones.

"Well, I promise," spoke Harry, "to take no mean advantage, but to meet him in fair open fight. I know that my temper is my worst enemy and has often made me do things which I was sorry for afterwards. But this time I will try to keep it within bounds. More I cannot promise. War is war. He may kill me as well as I kill him and I can see no harm in placing myself face to face with him and taking the chances of combat. But tell me, Aaron, where has he gone to?"

"To a distant part of the country," returned the other, "where you and he are not likely to meet."

"Well, where? Will you tell if I guess?"

"I will not. But pray don't frown so. Go home now and ask Jane's pardon for the unkind way you spoke to her."

"No, that I cannot do. To plight her troth to a Britisher is something I cannot forgive. But she is a foolish girl and will repent of her folly."

"Well, remember," continued Aaron, lifting his finger warningly, "remember!"

"Yes, yes. A fair, open fight, but that's all I'll promise." With this Harry M'Crea left his friend and went out into the night, where unseen and unheard he might utter maledictions on his sister's betrothed.

At nine o'clock this evening Knox entered the Ordinary and regretted to find that Harry was not there. "I have not laid eyes on him since he spoke to us on the porch," said Jane, who was alone in the sitting-room, knitting a pair of socks. "But, Aaron, sit down; your presence is such a comfort to me."

"I would willingly tarry," said Knox, touched by her simplicity—for she seemed not to dream of the deep wound which she had given his heart, and her eyes were resting upon him as confidingly as a child might look on its parent. "But you know that I must make ready for the enemy, and I only came to beg you not to leave the house to-night—nay," and as he said this a sad smile played on his lips, "let me begin my part as guardian by ordering you to stay in-doors."

Your bold spirit may prompt you to do something rash if you hear firing in the street, unless you are bound by a command."

"As you wish," said Jane. Then looking round to make sure that neither Mrs. M'Neil nor the Ancient were within hearing, "but I might get excited and forget myself; therefore suppose you come in half an hour and lock the doors. The widow has promised Smith, who sleeps in the log cabin close by, to rouse him if there's need; for he's a little deaf and might not hear the drum beat. But you can do that as well as she. So, return by and by and lock me in, and keep me safe for David."

"I will, and may the Lord spare you both to meet again," were Knox's words as he bade the young woman good night and went off to attend the muster of the minute-men.

CHAPTER II.

THE night was far advanced, the moon was waning, the watch-dogs, tired of baying at it, were one by one gone to sleep. On the porch of the Reverend Jonas Clark's house lay Willie Diman, the drummer boy and Jonathan Harrington* fifer of the Lexington minute-men, also Nathaniel Wyman, Jonas Parker and Solomon Pierce.

"I'll call you if there's need," Aaron Knox had said to them, and knowing his wakeful eye, they had given themselves up to repose. And certainly the poor fellows needed it, for they had toiled hard all day at the plough. Harry M'Crea, although he had not followed their example and lain down, could not keep his head from nodding, and now while he sat on the step of the porch, his eyes were closed. From the window above came the glimmer of a light: it was in the room occupied by Hancock and Adams, for the former, even

* Lived to be very old—Died March, 1854.

at this late hour, was busy writing to Patrick Henry to thank him for his soul-stirring speech to the Virginia Legislature on March the twenty third, which Henry ended with the cry, "Give me liberty, or give me death!"

But if the rest of the guard were asleep, Knox, as we have seen, was awake and wide awake, and as the moon, which was about to sink below the pine-trees on the hill where the Ancient loved to sit, threw her weird beams over him, you might almost have believed that it was not himself but one of his Puritan forefathers come back to earth, there was something so strangely grim and impressive in his look. The heavy brow, stern eye, and mouth firmly closed, marked him as one born to do the rough work of life without flinching; his broad shoulders seemed meant to carry any amount of responsibility; with him duty would be a matter of course, and on this memorable night Lexington might sleep in peace when he was keeping guard.

"Half-past two," he said, holding the face of his watch to the moonlight. "Time for us to get news if they're coming. Warren,* if it's in man's power, will send word what hour they leave Boston." Then putting his watch back in his pocket just as the moon fell behind the pines, Aaron began to listen attentively.

But all was still. It was too early for the cocks to crow, the watch-dogs were dreaming, not even a breath of wind stirred the branches of the elm overhead. Suddenly he started and put his hand to his ear. "That sounded very like a horse galloping," he said. "But 'twas a good distance off—I don't hear it any more. If it's a messenger from Warren, he's now passing over the low ground by the lily-pond, and in a little while I ought to hear him again. Noah Reed, on top of the hill, has a fierce hound, and the creature will bark like fury if a man goes by."

Knox hardly breathed as he stood listening. In a few minutes, from the direction of Noah Reed's cabin

* Joseph Warren—born in Mass. 1740. One of the earliest members of the Sons of Liberty.

came a loud howl, then as it died away he heard the clatter of hoofs quite distinctly. On, on, nearer, nearer it approached. Jotham Webb's curs took up the cry of Noah Reed's hound; the curs passed it on to Joshua Felt's bitch, and she yelped the alarm to the next dog on the road to Lexington. And all the while nearer, nearer, nearer came the clatter of hoofs. Aaron's heart beat violently, and he called Harry M'Crea and the rest of the sleepers. Harry was scarcely at his side a minute listening and quivering with excitement, when a horseman at full speed dashed into the village, and from one end of it to the other his voice sounded "To arms, to arms! they're coming!"

In another moment Paul Revere drew up his panting steed in front of Knox, who had hastened into the middle of the road.

"Warren has sent me," exclaimed the messenger, "to give warning that eight hundred grenadiers under Colonel Smith are on the march to this place and Concord. They left shortly after midnight. I am likewise ordered to say that the Committee of Safety do not wish the minute-men to fire first. Put the king's troops in the wrong." Then stopping only long enough to drink a glass of water and give Knox's hand a squeeze, Paul Revere continued his ride to Concord.

But before he had gone beyond the limits of the village, the drum was beating, the bell of the meeting-house wildly ringing, and men, women and children were rushing from their homes, half clad and in the greatest terror, for they believed that the enemy was close upon them.

"I say, Billy Smith, are you awake?" screamed a female voice, from one of the upper windows of Buckman's tavern. "Are you awake?" while holding fast to Mrs. M'Neil's nightgown was Jane M'Crea, who was in mortal dread lest the dame should lose her balance and fall out, and at the same time she was doing her utmost to calm the good woman's excitement, and explain how it happened that the doors were locked

But Jane's words were unheeded; as well might a zephyr have tried to stop a hurricane.

"Get up!" shouted the widow. "A scurvy trick you've played! But I'll remember it! Get up and die for your country."

"That's not encouraging," said Mr. Smith, who, although he was trembling under his blanket, was at the same time unable to repress a smile as he thought of how opportunely Knox had appeared five hours before and fastened the doors of the Ordinary, and thus saved him from carrying out his own ingenious plan of stuffing dirt into the keyholes.

"I'll prove to her that I didn't lock her in." Then raising himself on his elbows and peeping out of the little window near his bed, "thank Heaven," he continued, "them bean-poles are stuck just where they be. If they was a mite closer to the house she'd slide down one of 'em. But Lord! I hope she won't try a jump!"

While Mrs. M'Neil's admirer was thus congratulating himself, the minute-men were assembling, and in about a quarter of an hour, one hundred and twenty-nine sturdy fellows under the command of Captain John Parker, were mustered on the green, and answered to their names. Only one man was missing, and Sergeant Knox was sent to find him.

"I'm coming," said Mr. Smith, the instant Aaron struck his fist on the cabin door; "coming just as soon as I can get on my boots."

And Smith kept his word and took his place in the ranks, passing first, however, under Mrs. M'Neil's window to tell the dame, who was still calling out to him, that he was going to die for his country. At which she clapped her hands and said she would pray that he might be spared.

"Be sure," said Captain Parker, when the men had loaded their pieces, "be sure to give the British troops no cause of provocation when they arrive. In no way meddle with them unless they insult us. 'Tis the wish of the Committee of Safety that we shed not first

blood.”* Then having sent Thaddeus Bowman on a swift horse to gallop down the Boston road and keep a bright look-out, he allowed the company to break ranks, with the order to reassemble at the tap of the drum.

“It may be good policy,” said Knox to Harry M’Crea, as they sauntered off in the direction of the tavern, “to let the enemy begin the fight. It may be. But then if they are eight hundred strong and we are not to fire till they have fired on us, I would advise making no parade at all. Better fall back on Concord and join forces with the minute-men there. By so doing we would deceive the Red-coats and get them to come all the way without sending back for reinforcements, which ever so small an opposition here might frighten them into doing. Moreover, I would give them all the time they wanted to destroy the stores in Concord and thus the militia of the whole country around would have a chance to unite with us when the hour came to make the attack.

“Perhaps even Colonel Pickering’s regiment from Salem might be able to join us; ’tis seven hundred strong and counted the finest body of men in the Province.”

To these remarks Harry made no answer. The truth is his fiery nature ill-brooked the idea of retreat; instead of going backwards towards Concord, if he could have had his way, he would have advanced at once to meet the grenadiers.

Presently, the young men entered the Ordinary, followed by Mr. Smith, where Mrs. M’Neil brewed them some hot punch which was most grateful, especially to her lover, who, although he did his utmost to appear calm and collected, could not keep his teeth from chattering, and ’twas remarked that he spoke very little. Nor was Harry M’Crea inclined to converse, but sat on a bench next to Smith, which conduct sorely grieved Jenny, who knew what it meant, and the poor girl would have approached her brother and beg-

* See Parker’s affidavit in Dawson’s *Battles of U. S. by sea and land.*

ged him to be reconciled with her, but for the forbidding scowl on his face.

And so passed the first hour after the warning given by Paul Revere. Knox would every now and then go out on the porch to listen for Thaddeus Bowman's horse, and twice he went as far as the meeting-house, where many of the militia had left their guns, and he regretted to find how scattered the company was. If Aaron had been captain he would have kept them together.

"Well, I'll go down the road a bit and reconnoitre," said Smith, just as the clock struck four; at which Mrs. M'Neil gave him an approving squint, for Knox had told her that Billy had so far done his duty. Accordingly, after examining in their presence the flint of his rifle, Mr. Smith departed. No sooner was he gone than Jane M'Crea playfully chided the widow for ever having doubted his courage, and the dame acknowledged that she had been guilty of rash judgment.

"Whoever's killed this day 'twon't be me," chuckled Billy Smith, as soon as the door closed behind him. "I'm a coward and I don't deceive myself about it. But 't isn't my fault; the Lord don't make us all alike. He could have run me in a different mould if he'd been a mind."

Thus soliloquizing he walked with cautious steps until he was out of sight of the tavern, then vaulting over the stone-wall he made for the timber, which was about twenty rods distant, where let us leave him for the present, chewing a piece of birchwood and racking his brains to discover some way of deceiving Mrs. M'Neil when he should return to town.

At length the grey light, which stole in through the windows of the Ordinary, told that day was breaking. It was half past four, and Knox, after again bidding Jane M'Crea remain in-doors, repaired to the green accompanied by Harry. The hearts of both throbbed with feverish excitement, and Aaron told Captain Parker that the enemy ought to appear very soon.

"They left Boston," said he, "four hours ago, and

'tis only thirteen miles : I hope Bowman will keep a good lookout."

While he was making these remarks he little dreamt that Bowman was a prisoner, having been captured unawares by a flanking party.

"Hark!" he exclaimed, just after he had looked at his watch and observed that it was five o'clock, "Hark! what's that?"

They listened with bated breath for about a minute, and while they were listening there came from the direction of the Boston road a sound which was not at all like the sound of Bowman's horse: 'twas a dull, heavy tramp—tramp—tramp—more like the beating of the earth's heart, and Harry declared that he heard the clank of a sword.

"Good God, there they are!" cried Knox, when presently a horseman in scarlet uniform, appeared in view, and behind him rose a forest of bayonets.

In an instant Aaron roused Diman the drummer-boy, who lay stretched on the turf fast asleep. The drum beat a few quick taps, then like a brave lad Diman threw it aside and snatching a rifle hastened to place himself near his captain.

"Too late! It's a surprise," muttered Harry M'Crea, and even as the words left his lips the British, five hundred strong, were marching at quick step past the Ordinary, through the window of which Jane and Mrs. M'Neil were gazing with blanched cheeks. This part of the enemy's force had been sent ahead with orders to press on to Concord and secure the bridge over Concord river, while Colonel Smith, after sending back for reinforcements, was advancing leisurely with the rest of the troops.

While the grenadiers were nearing the green, the militia were flocking to the meeting-house to get their arms, and as we may well believe, there was not a little confusion among them.

"Humph!" said Knox, grinding his teeth, "it matters not how many of us form line, 'twill be only slaughter."

"Well, they may fire first," muttered Harry, his eye flashing as it rested on the mounted officer, who was now marshalling his followers at the distance of fifty feet from where he stood, "but they'll not fire last."

"No, by Heaven," said Knox. "If I don't fall I'll rouse every minute-man in the country around, and before sundown the Redcoats will wish they hadn't left Boston."

He had scarcely spoken these words, when Major Pitcairn rode a few paces nearer, then brandishing his sword, exclaimed in a threatening tone, "Lay down your arms, you damned rebels; lay down your arms and disperse!"

It was a solemn moment: Jane M'Crea heard the officer's voice and covered her face with her hands—Mrs. M'Neil shrunk back from the window. But the Americans, though less than forty in number, stood firm.* In another moment the officer drew his pistol, rode to the flank of his line, then, rising in his stirrups, shouted, "Fire!"

A flash—a few agonizing shrieks—the echoes of the volley dying away along the fields and forest, and all was over. And when the smoke, which hung heavily above the green this April morning—as if nature were ashamed to reveal the deed which had been committed—rose into the air, you counted seventeen men stretched on the sod. Seven were already dead and Jonas Parker dying fast. Yet even as the red stream gushed from his breast, Jonas lifted himself on his elbow and tried to point his rifle.

"Now, Harry," said Knox, "quick—before they reload," and 'bang—bang' went two pieces and a couple of grenadiers were seen to fall. Major Pitcairn in an instant spurred his steed toward them, and Harry and Aaron, swift-footed as they were, had all they could do to gain the other side of the wall which lined the highway, before his sword was upon them. Then

* Only 38 were in line.—Dawson's *Battles of U. S. By Sea and Land*. Stedman I, p. 116.

crouching behind a rock, they again loaded, and while the officer was cursing at them, they had the satisfaction to see another red uniform drop to the earth, while the major's horse reared and fell over backward, giving its rider a narrow escape from being crushed to death.

"He'll need another nag," said Harry M'Crea with a savage laugh.

"But you fired too low," spoke Knox. "Keep cool—do, and let every aim you take to-day be as if 'twere at a turkey-match—steady and true. But come!" With this they glided swiftly from the shelter of the rock, and despite a shower of bullets reached the woods, which at the distance of about twenty rods, skirted the road all the way to Concord.

For a quarter of a mile or so the friends kept company. But when they came to Wild-cat Run, where they stopped to quench their thirst, they held a consultation, and 'twas agreed that Harry should recross the highroad and summon Noah Wiswell and Israel Everett—brave, stalwart farmers who dwelt in that direction. "Tell them," said Aaron, "to bring as much powder and lead as they can carry. And if 'tisn't too far, keep on across the swamp and warn Perley Putnam and Ben Pierce. While I'll give the cry on this side of the road, and by the time we meet in Concord we'll each have a company at our heels."

With this understanding they separated. And Noah Wiswell and his son Japhet, Israel Everett and ten others left their ploughs in the furrow to join Harry M'Crea as soon as he ran up and told what had happened that morning in Lexington.

And Aaron Knox, although he was not quite so active as Harry, roused full as many minute-men; and Asahel Porter got up from a sick bed to go with him, Mrs. Porter helping her husband fill his powder horn and bullet pouch, then, kissing him a last kiss, for Asahel never came back.

The sun was not far above the horizon when the friends rejoined each other on the green at Concord,

which they found quite deserted, the militia of the town having withdrawn to a high piece of ground north of the Lexington road, whence they could command the approach of the enemy, and where at this moment their flag of white bunting with a green pine tree in the middle, was waving defiantly in the breeze.

We need not say how lustily the new-comers were cheered, and Aaron Knox, by common consent, was chosen to be leader, for all knew what stuff he was made of, and the first words which he addressed to them sent a thrill through every heart.

"I am glad," he said, after rapidly counting their numbers, "I am glad the day is going to be fine and that the wind has risen; we'll need all the blue sky and breeze we can get, for there's hot work before us. And now I advise falling back to the hill across the north bridge. 'Tis a mile away I know, but by so doing we shall lead the enemy on. You have removed a great deal of the stores to a safe place in the woods, and while they are busy destroying what you have not had time to hide, our friends from Acton, Lincoln and other towns can add their strength to ours. All I ask is that you trust in me, and I'll give you all the revenge you want before the sun sets."

They did as Knox advised, albeit a few declared 'twere better to hold fast where they were and abide the consequences.*

Scarcely had they taken up their new position when the grenadiers appeared in sight, cheering, waving their banner, and evidently in high spirits—for they believed that to conquer the colonies was going to be only a holiday march. Knox smiled a grim smile as the cheering reached him, and laying his hand on Harry M'Crea's shoulder, "don't chafe," he said; "twill be our turn to cheer by and by."

But there were those among the minute-men who thought hard things of Aaron during the next few hours. They could not appreciate his strategy. First, the tall liberty pole which the Concord people were so

* Shattuck v. 105

proud of—for 'twas made of a single stick of hickory and they had hunted a long time before they found the tree—was seen to fall; and again the enemy cheered and waved their flag. Then the malt house of Ebenezer Hubbard, which contained a quantity of flour, was destroyed. The trunnions of three iron twenty-four pound cannon were knocked off; sixteen new carriage wheels broken in pieces, and five hundred pounds of balls were thrown into the mill pond.

"'Tis hard to stand here and watch the villains doing that," spoke Harry M'Crea in an angry tone, and a dozen voices cried, "yes, yes; it is."

Knox made no reply, but pointed to a group of men hastening toward them; they hailed from Lincoln, and in a few minutes another squad arrived. It was now an hour and a half after sunrise, the work of destruction was going steadily on, and frightened women and children kept coming up the hill to tell their husbands, fathers, sons of the havoc which the grenadiers were making in the once peaceful happy settlement.

At ten o'clock Colonel Smith, with the reinforcements, joined Major Pitcairn; while at the same hour ninety minute-men came up from Bedford, closely followed by thirty more from Lincoln to swell Knox's little army. Then arrived the minute-men of Carlisle. Nearer and nearer the sun approached the meridian. The Americans grew more and more impatient and 'twould have taken but a word from bold Harry M'Crea to send them forward with a rush.

But Knox, his arms folded, and with eyes sternly fixed on Concord, would not consent to advance. "Not yet, not yet," he said to the murmuring multitude. "You have promised to obey me; do so and I promise to give you before long all the revenge you want." And while he was speaking a hundred and twenty men arrived from Acton. At length—and by Aaron's watch 'twas noon—there rose from the village green a wreath of smoke. In a few minutes more, flames were seen to burst from two or three houses.

"Now men," he cried, "your homes are burning; will you follow me?"

"Yes, yes; on on," was the tumultuous response, accompanied by a loud wail from the women and children.

"And when they begin to retreat," added Aaron, "keep them on the jump; give them no rest; let every tree and rock and wall from here to Boston ring with a tongue of fire."

Then down went the minute-men toward the north bridge, which some grenadiers under Captain Lawrie tried to defend—but only pulled up a few planks; and over the bridge they poured, keeping no order—helter skelter—every one for himself, but all with vengeance burning in their breasts.

Colonel Smith, who had heard the wild shout on the hill, quickly perceived that it was time for him to withdraw, and without even waiting for all his scattered parties to collect, the retreat commenced.

The British at first marched in good order and took well the volley which was poured into them and which killed three lieutenants and eleven privates; then at the word of command they faced about and returned the fire. But the Americans were so divided into numberless little groups that the discharge killed only three.

At length, however, when from behind rocks and stumps and stone walls, an invisible foe picked them off with deadly aim, the discipline of the grenadiers was tried as it had never been before. Wearied by a long night march, allowed no time for rest in Concord, their commander severely wounded, their serried ranks began to waver, then to open, and soon they became a confused, panic-stricken multitude.

"It's now our turn to cheer," cried Knox, as he saw the color-bearer drop under his fire.

"Yes," returned Harry M'Crea, "and unless they get more reinforcements we'll bag the whole lot."

And so on the British fled—those in the advance straining their eyes to see if relief were not coming—

the minute-men keeping pace with them, gliding from tree to tree, rock to rock, wall to wall, and every step of the way sounding death music in their ears.

Finally, when they got to within half a mile of Lexington, those in advance set up a shout of joy: the cross of Saint George was seen flying from an eminence near the town, and beside the flag were two cannon flanked by a long line of infantry. Well might the grenadiers rejoice; this timely reinforcement had saved them from complete destruction.

For about twenty minutes now the exhausted fugitives were allowed to repose, while the Americans gathered around General William Heath,* who had followed the enemy out of Boston and who here assumed command of the little army of patriots.

"My friends," he said, "you have done nobly; but you have still thirteen miles to drive them: so look to your flints and powder horns."

"Aaron Knox of this here place, whom we chose to be our leader, was right," spoke Noah Wiswell, "he told us to have patience and he'd give us satisfaction. But for him we'd have closed with the Redcoats afore we had half our strength. He kept us back till just the right moment."

"That's a fact," said another voice. "I growled at first, but now I acknowledge he knew what he was about."

"Yes, he did so," exclaimed a third.

Then Heath took Aaron's hand and thanked him, and 'twas a proud moment for the young man.

Soon the time allowed for rest was past, and the tired grenadiers begged for yet a little more. But Lord Percy would not consent; already a number of fresh minute-men had joined the rebels; it was four o'clock; thirteen miles still to go before reaching Boston; no, he would not tarry any longer. Accordingly, the British once more began to retreat; setting

* The first American General who commanded in armed opposition to British troops.

fire to three houses and a barn, as they passed through Lexington.

But the Americans too, had benefited by the halt, and now at General Heath's command they took up the pursuit with increased vigor, and the fighting all the way to West Cambridge, was very different from what it had been between Concord and Lexington. Not only did the minute-men venture boldly up to the retreating column, but Lord Percy sent out flanking parties, and with one of these a sharp conflict took place, in which Knox had the breast of his coat torn off by a bayonet. By the time the King's troops had gone half way, forty of them were killed, and one hundred and twenty wounded and left behind on the road, for their comrades refused to carry them.

Lord Percy saw with dismay his ranks growing more and more confused, and anxiously he strained his eyes toward Cambridge.

But this vigorous pursuit cost the Americans very dear: Since leaving Lexington thirty three of them were killed and nineteen wounded. The sight of the retreating foe, however, kept up their ardor; they needed no words of encouragement from their commander; closer and closer they pressed, and at West Cambridge, where Joseph Warren joined them, a bold attempt was made to capture the cannon. A hand to hand struggle followed; the stock of Harry M'Crea's rifle was shattered to pieces, but snatching away his adversary's weapon he spitted him with his own bayonet; Knox lay for a moment stunned by a blow on the head, and how he escaped death was a miracle; Noah Wiswell fought desperately to save his son Japhet, who was killed by the cannon wheels; while Tom Winship, a lad of fifteen, who carried the pine tree flag of the Concord minute-men, was last seen alive within a few feet of Lord Percy's horse; he died, trampled under the hoofs of the steed, holding with his teeth and the finger-grip of death to the piece of bunting, which the enemy could hardly boast that they captured, for there was nothing of it left but a few bloody shreds.

Twenty-five grenadiers were killed and sixty wounded in repelling the charge, while of the Americans twenty-six were killed and twenty wounded.

This attack on the cannon ended the fight : General Gage, with a large body of troops, was seen advancing to meet Lord Percy, and Heath ordered the pursuit to cease.

Let us now go back and see how it has fared with Billy Smith since we left him twelve hours ago. Our friend, be it known, had chosen for his place of concealment a hollow about ninety yards from the road. He would have gone further had the woods been deeper, but they soon ended, and then came a broad strip of open land, which under the circumstances he did not care to cross, lest some early riser might meet him and ask what he was about.

"This'll do," he said, as he stretched himself out on the dead leaves, which had gathered here to the depth of a foot or more. "A tip-top bed, and this tree will shelter me if it comes on to rain, which I don't think it will."

The tree which he alluded to was a whitewood of gigantic proportions, and one of its lower limbs slanted downward and really formed a tolerable covering for the hollow.

"And now," he continued, "I must set to work and dig up my brains to find some way of throwing dust in Mrs. M'Neil's eyes. 'Twill be a hard thing to do, I know, for eyes like her'n can see through almost any lie, no matter how thick."

While Billy was thus soliloquizing, Major Pitcairn's grenadiers went past, and as long as he could hear their tramp he stopped thinking about the widow, and lest some of the enemy might be advancing through the woods as well as by the road, he threw leaves over his body and left nothing visible except his head. And when he had done this he tried to stop breathing, but did not quite succeed ; yet so very still did he lie, that a catbird lit upon his legs and flew off with one of the leaves. His feelings when the volley was fired

at the minute-men on the green, we cannot describe ; but you might have supposed that he had been lying out all night in the dew, from the appearance of his forehead, which became suddenly covered with moisture.

At length when the enemy resumed their march to Concord, his peace of mind returned, and he again set vigorously to work to hit on some plan for deceiving Mrs. M'Neil.

"It has to be done," he said, "or my chances of winning her and the five acres of land are gone ; she must believe me a hero."

But although he turned his brains upside down, he was as much in the fog at noon as at sunrise. He struck his forehead, pulled a fist full of hair out, cursed his want of ingenuity, and was almost ready to cry when he heard firing in the distance. He listened—it was approaching—again his brow became damp ; and when Lord Percy went by with the fresh troops, our friend gave himself up for lost.

But during the lull in the fight, when, as we have related, the beaten grenadiers under Colonel Smith, rested for awhile near Lexington, protected by the reinforcements, he once more applied himself to the solution of the problem—how to lie successfully to the widow. But we need not say that he continued very quiet ; he lay ten times stiller than a mouse, and when an ant crawled along his nose he did not attempt to brush it off. Suddenly a piece of bark dropped from the tree above and presently another piece followed ; then without moving his head a hair's breadth, but by doing violence to one of his eyes, he espied a raccoon cautiously descending.

Now be it known that our friend, although he had a strong aversion to being shot at himself, was a great coon-hunter ; and once, when Jane M'Crea had playfully chided him for wasting so much time at the sport, he gravely replied that he wanted to kill as many of them as possible in this world, for he was not sure that there were any coons in the next. The one which was

coming down the tree at this moment was an uncommonly large animal, and so black that Billy, whenever he had spoken about him to David Jones, (who like himself was a born Nimrod,) had always called him the 'Parson.' Many a morning had our friend left his bed before cockcrow in hopes of getting a shot at him; but the 'Parson' had only once been hit, and never until now had he been so close to Billy. Down, down, lower and lower he crawled, perfectly unconscious that anybody besides himself was in the woods. Only once on his way down the trunk did he stop to sniff the air; but he concluded that it was a mistake, and well he might, for the catbird just then took another leaf off Billy's leg.

"I call this bad luck," thought Smith, grinding his teeth. "What a whopper! His skin would fetch a Spanish dollar." At length the raccoon crawled out on the limb which sheltered the hollow, and our hero could distinguish a bare white spot on his throat—'twas the scar from the only wound which Billy had ever given him. Now this was too much for Mrs. M'Neil's lover to bear unmoved, so, grasping his hat, he flung it at the 'Parson.'

To say that the latter was astonished would be a waste of words; so completely did he lose his presence of mind, when the hat grazed his back, that he let go the limb and fell almost on Smith's body; then off he scampered without once looking to see if anything was after him, while Billy lay trembling with excitement and cursing his ill-luck, for not only had the 'Parson' escaped, but Billy's hat—the only one he owned—had got stuck in a crotch of the tree, out of reach.

For awhile our friend stared at his hat and took a careful survey of the whitewood (for he meant to climb it after dark), then to his horror the firing recommenced, and for the third time the perspiration started out on his brow.

"It's coming almighty close," he said, trying to bury his head under the leaves. Soon footsteps passed

within twenty paces of him and he could distinguish Knox's voice encouraging the minute-men, while the sharp crack of the rifles—the yells—and cheers—and shrieks, drove out of his mind all thoughts about the raccoon.

Suddenly he heard a whizzing, buzzing sound, very like a bumblebee, pass over the hollow and he hugged the ground closer than ever, and wished that the Lord had created him a mole, and while he was wishing this, down fell his hat! But he did not venture to reach out his hand for it until the firing had receded a good mile; then he drew it toward him, and as he did so an expression of ecstatic joy spread over his face. "'Tis a Special Providence!" he cried, forgetting in his excitement that somebody might be within earshot. "A special providence! a bullet through my hat! God bless the 'Parson' for coming down the tree!" Then on his knees he kissed and kissed the hat over and over again, while tears of joy rolled down his cheeks.

"I've been under fire," he cried, "Mrs. M'Neil, get your wedding-gown ready!"

And thus he went on laughing and rubbing his hands, frightening the catbird off her nest and all the while little dreaming who was looking at him. But highly elated as he was, his judgment told him that it was too early to show himself in Lexington. "When it begins to get dusky," he soliloquized, "then I'll enter along with others who will doubtless be going home at that hour."

Accordingly, he remained under the whitewood tree until sundown, and even then he did not venture far from the hollow, but waited until the stars were all shining and he could hear voices of persons whom he knew going by, and from what they were saying he felt convinced that the battle was over. Then, after wetting a little powder and rubbing it on his hands and face, he started for Buckman's tavern; and so impatient was he to arrive and confront his lady-love that he overtook and passed his friends, scarcely giving them a nod.

"I'll go in by the side door," he said, "and have the meeting in the little private parlor, where I can speak out freely what's on my mind."

Accordingly, after pausing a moment with his hand on the latch, so as to gather up his thoughts in a good hard knot, he drew a long breath and entered. In the room he found Mrs. M'Neil and Jane M'Crea—the latter looking very pale and endeavoring in a frightened, nervous way to draw a shawl over her shoulders.

"Oh, here's Smith!" exclaimed the widow, clasping her hands; "he's been in the action and must know something about them. Pray, sir, have you seen or heard anything of Harry M'Crea and Knox?"

"Well, ma'am, you don't know what a battle is until you see one," returned Billy; "what with smoke and dust and excitement, a fellow has no chance to notice where his friends are. All a true man think's about is finding the enemy and fighting him. But I did once hear Knox's voice: 'twas while the battle was raging half a mile below here, and when our lads were driving the Redcoats like sheep towards Boston. Aaron was cheering and encouraging us to close with them, and no doubt Harry was there, but I can't positively swear that I saw him."

"My God!" sighed Jane, "I hope they are not killed."

"Well, whatever has happened to them, you've had a narrow escape," continued the widow, taking Billy's hat and running her finger through the bullet-hole. "Yet I'm sure the consciousness of having done your duty more than repays you for all the risks you have incurred since morning. Mr. Smith, I said a good many prayers for you to-day."

"And your prayers have been heard," spoke her lover, rubbing the top of his head; "but 'twas indeed a narrow escape. Is there any mark here?"

"Not that I can see," answered Mrs. M'Neil, as he bowed down to let her examine his scalp. "But 'twas a mighty close shave. Did you feel any concussion as the ball went through the hat?"

"Well, I can't say that I did. You see, bullets go so all fired quick that a fellow isn't conscious of their presence until he's hit. But thank the Lord I'm safe and shall live to fight other battles for liberty, and—and—"

Here the widow, who, when she first noticed the bullet-hole, had quite forgotten whither any remarks upon it might lead, turned scarlet and whispering to Jane M'Crea that she would come back by and by, hastily left the room. But before the door of the staircase closed behind her, Mr. Smith cleared his throat and in a firm voice exclaimed, "Mrs. M'Neil, this hat shall go down as an heirloom to the children."

As soon as she was gone our friend turned to Jane M'Crea and expressed his deep regret that he could give her no news of her brother or Knox, and he was proceeding to comfort her when she took a seat directly in front of him and thus interrupted his discourse: "Mr. Smith," she began, "I want you to go on an errand for me, but before I tell what it is, let me ask, did you do any fighting to-day?"

At this startling question Billy's knees gave way an inch and a half at least, and a queer feeling came over him—'twas as if his whole body were sinking down into his boots; for it was clear, from the way the girl eyed him that she knew what he had been about since morning. But he did not open his lips until he had glanced toward the door and made sure that it was well closed. Then in a low, tremulous voice, "Miss Jenny," he began, "your question is like yourself, open and honest and without any corners for a fellow to creep around: I did no fighting at all to-day. But, Miss Jenny," here tears started to his eyes, "don't tell on me, or I'll be chased out of the township."

"Trust me, Mr. Smith," continued the young woman; "it shall remain a profound secret. But I wish to say to you that it was very wrong to act as you did; a man with your health and strength to lie hidden in the woods, when every rifle was needed against the enemy! oh, shame, shame! And then to return home

and impose upon Mrs. M'Neil with your hat ! But perhaps 'twas fortunate that I saw you, for it may be the means of creating a great reformation in your character."

For about a minute the culprit hung his head in silence, then suddenly looking up and in a firm, determined voice, "Miss Jenny," he said, "although 'twill be doing violence to my nature, I promise to behave better in future. I wasn't run in the mould of a hero ; but I'll do my duty henceforward if it's only to please you. There's not another girl in Lexington but would hold me up to scorn ; but you spare me, and now tell what you want me to do ; send me anywhere, I'll obey and serve you faithfully."

It was evident from his tone and expression that her words had made a deep impression on him, and we do not doubt that had the enemy appeared at this moment on the green, he would really have fought like a hero.

"Well, I want you," said Jane, letting the shawl slip from her shoulders, "to go for the Doctor ; Mrs. M'Neil is frightened and declares that she won't rest until he examines my wound."

At this Billy Smith started : "Heavens !" he cried, "Brave Jane M'Crea ! that blood shames me ; coward that I was ! Tell me, Pride of Lexington, are you much hurt ?"

"The arm isn't broken—at least I think not ; see," here she moved it a little, though evidently with pain. "But it has bled a good deal, and I'm weak, and perhaps 'twill be well to go for Doctor Lilly. But if he's busy with other wounded persons—and, alas, I fear there will be many brought in to-night—tell him I'm not seriously hurt and can wait. Now don't forget this ; he must neglect nobody to come here."

We need not say that Smith performed his errand at a run, and as he sped along he kept repeating to himself, "coward that I am ! coward that I am !"

As Jane M'Crea supposed, there was work enough for a score of surgeons this evening, and it was not

until Billy had stopped and inquired at three or four houses, then travelled on to Abel Prescott's cabin, two miles away, that he found Doctor Lilly, who had already performed several amputations and was now bandaging the stump of Prescott's leg and cheering the poor fellow with the assurance that he would be able to plough almost as well with a wooden one. Then while Mrs. M'Neil's admirer stood looking on by the bedside, Abel began to tell how bravely Jane M'Crea had behaved, and when Billy interrupted him and said that she was wounded, Prescott pushed Doctor Lilly away and implored him to lose not a moment in going to her.

In the meanwhile Jane and Mr. Woodbury were conversing together in the room of the former, and her face wore an expression of trouble which was not in keeping with her bold, joyous character.

"He certainly had a fine figure and sat his horse well," spoke the Ancient; "but then beauty doesn't make the man: his countenance was bad, and I rejoiced when you let the rosebud which he had taken from his button-hole and given you, drop in the dust. And then you trod on it; oh, yes, I rejoiced at that. But, Jenny, what was it he said?"

"He asked me to take the flower and name a place where he might meet me; and when I crushed the rosebud under my foot, he said that it did not matter: He would follow me to the end of the earth—that I should not escape. And there was something like a hiss in his voice and his eyes glittered like the eyes of a serpent, and a strange horrid feeling came over me—'twas as if he were drawing me towards him; and yet his hand was not touching me; it must have been imagination." Here the young woman paused a moment and shuddered, while her face grew deadly white. Much as she loved and trusted Josiah Woodbury, she hesitated to reveal to him her inmost thoughts.

"He might believe me mad," she said to herself, "if I told him the deep impression which that stranger

has left upon me and how I hear ringing in my ears the words, "you shall not escape—you shall not escape."

"But, Mr. Woodbury," she continued, "pray don't whisper a syllable of this to anybody; for all the world I would not have Mrs. M'Neil know it, nor Aaron Knox, who would worry so that he'd never let me go out of his sight again."

"I promise to keep mum," returned the old man; "but really I wonder who that officer was: could he have been Lord Percy?"

"Oh, no! I saw him, and he looked the true gentleman every inch. The person who accosted me had a strong foreign accent and I do not doubt he is one of those Hessians that they say are coming over to help conquer us."

The incident here alluded to, and which had inspired the young woman with a foreboding of approaching evil, took place during the halt of the British troops at Lexington this afternoon. But let us dismiss the subject for the present; Jane and the Ancient have stopped talking about it and are now listening attentively, for a wagon has just driven up to the tavern and there are voices on the porch.

"It's Harry and Aaron; thank God! thank God!" cried the girl, rising from her chair.

"Yes," said Mrs. M'Neil, who had just entered the room, "I know their steps, I must hurry down again."

"Oh do!" said Jane. "And make some good excuse for me, for I dare not show myself to Knox; he would scold me so for disobeying his orders about remaining at home, and Harry, if he were to see my wound, would curse David more bitterly than ever."

Promising to try her best to conceal what had happened, the widow hastened below, accompanied by the Ancient, and found sure enough, Harry and Aaron safe and sound, and but for their powder-begrimed faces, looking pretty much as when they had started off that morning; only Knox's coat was badly torn in

front, and the breast of his shirt gone, and you could see where the bayonet had grazed him.

"Welcome! welcome!" cried the dame, shaking them each by the hand. "Aye, welcome! welcome!" chimed in Mr. Woodbury, "can't tell how anxious we've been about you; Miss Jenny is dreadful worried—thought you might be killed."

"Well, it has been hot work; never saw the like afore; but 'twas grand!" spoke Harry, his eyes flashing.

"And the work was thoroughly done," said Knox. "True, we didn't capture their cannon, but we kept them on the jump the whole way to West Cambridge, and if the Salem regiment had only come up in time, we'd have bagged every Redcoat. But now tell me how is Jenny?"

At this question Mrs. M'Neil drew a long breath, then coughed, while the Ancient took a piece of calamus root from his pocket and made believe he was trying to break it in two.

"She is well, I hope?" continued Aaron.

"Was she ever anything else?" spoke the widow, "she helped the whole forenoon among the wounded who fell on the green, and has now retired: you wouldn't disturb her?"

"No, indeed. But now tell us who were killed this morning; I hadn't time to look."

"Well, there's Jonas Parker—poor Jonas! his mother's only support—and Bob Monroe, Sam Hadley, Isaac Muzzy, John Brown, Jedediah Moore, John Raymond, and Nat Wyman."*

"And Billy Smith? He escaped of course," put in Harry M'Crea. "Hidden in the hay mow, I bet."

"No; don't you remember he started off at dawn on a reconnoissance?" said Knox, "I am sure he has done his duty."

"Well, he got a ball through his hat; that much I can vouch for," spoke the Ancient.

"No?" exclaimed Harry. "Then I ask his pardon for saying what I did."

* See 18th Vol. Mass. Hist. Coll.

While they were thus talking about Smith, Mrs. M'Neil remained silent; she had been even more astonished than Jane's brother at her lover's courage, and was in dread of the moment when he should catch her alone. "I promised him that I would be his," she said to herself, "if he behaved like a man, and now I don't see how I can escape. But after all I might get a worse partner. He doesn't drink—at least not to excess, has a good heart, and seems to adore me. So I suppose—" Here the current of her thoughts was suddenly interrupted by a violent knock on the door, which she had locked after Harry and Aaron entered, and they all turned towards it—the blow was so loud.

"Who's there?" exclaimed Knox.

"Open and I'll tell you," answered a rough voice; "this is a place of public entertainment—open!"

At a sign from the widow, Aaron turned the key, and in another moment stood before them a short, stout man, with black curly locks and a face as red as an Indian—'twas so sunburnt. In his ears were earrings, and his red flannel shirt, which was open in front, showed the figure of an anchor tattooed on his breast. Behind him were seven sturdy fellows, dressed much like himself, and each, besides a rifle, had at his side a cutlass.

"What's wanted?" inquired Knox. "At this hour the tavern is closed; too late for anything to drink."

"Aye, you must depart," said the widow—who despite the wild look of the strangers, was not afraid to speak out.

"Well, I've a right to intrude," continued the one with the anchor on his breast; "yes, by heaven I have a right to come and say thanks to the girl who saved my life: Bob Broughton* of Marblehead and his crew would have been killed to-day but for Jane M'Crea. Doesn't she live here?"

"Saved your life!" exclaimed Aaron in amaze-

* Capt. Broughton, of Marblehead, was the first to receive a naval commission Sept. 2d 1775, and commanded the Hannah.

ment, while Harry gazed hard at Mrs. M'Neil and Mr. Woodbury, who both hung down their heads and looked guilty, for they knew Jane had not been seen by either of them the whole afternoon, until she had returned home wounded.

"Yes, saved my life. You must know that my crew and I had come to pay a visit to Jake Tice, who owns a farm not far from here: Tice used to sail with us, but got sick of whaling and so took to raising pumpkins. Well, of course, we couldn't sit quiet all day and look on, while you fellows were having all the fun; so we grabbed the rifles from those who were wounded and did our level best against the Redcoats. But somehow we got separated from the main body of the minute-men—I don't know what time exactly; guess 'twas nigh six bells, middle watch. Well, the British had a flanking party out, and they drove us into a clump of cedars and were closing in upon us, for our fire was getting slack for want of powder, and I began to feel desperate and had just given the command 'Stand by to repel boarders,' when what should I see running towards us but a girl with a lot of powder-horns slung on her shoulder. 'Twas a splendid sight! There was no tacking: bow on she came, every stitch of canvas set and looking like—like—" here Bob Broughton turned to his crew. "Like the Witch of the Wave," spoke the man nearest to him.

"Aye, by Kidd's soul, so she did!" thundered the captain. "Like the Witch of the Wave, with a ten knot breeze behind her and every reef shaken out." Then fixing his wild eyes on Harry M'Crea, who had come close to his elbow and was looking intensely interested: "the Witch," he continued, "was a schooner I built two years ago this very month; and Marblehead never saw a prettier craft. Such raking masts! and a bow that loved to dip into the billows. But she was a saucy thing and one stormy day took it into her head to play me a trick. 'Twas morning watch, two bells just struck, and Nantucket bearing

west by north distant seven miles. You see I remember the very spot ; oh, I'll never forget it !”

“ Never forget it—never forget it !” answered the crew in solemn chorus.

“ Well, as I said, 'twas a stormy day—sea running mountain-high—nothing set but the jib, and that was in ribbons. But we were leaking not a drop.”

“ Not a drop !” repeated the chorus, “ not a drop !”

“ And I'd 'ave been commanding the Witch to-day if she hadn't got tired of sailing on top of the water and taken it into her head to see how things looked below. So when the wave she was waiting for came along, she dipped her bow under and disappeared, leaving me and my crew to play with the sharks and porpoises ; but the Witch didn't mean to drown us, no, no, indeed, for she sent up a spar which floated us ashore.”

“ What a pity she foundered !” exclaimed Harry.

“ Foundered ?” thundered Broughton. “ I say she didn't. 'Twas just a trick she played : the Witch 'll bob up some day off Cape Horn, with a crew of mermaids aboard ; and if I catch her !” Here he laughed and shook his fist. “ But now that I've done telling what Jane M'Crea looked like, I want to see the girl and thank her for the powder she brought us, and which made the Redcoats about-ship and scud.”

“ Well, ask her to come down,” said Knox, turning to the widow. “ I won't scold her for disobeying me, nor you either for trying to conceal what she has been doing.”

Mrs. M'Neil, accordingly, went up stairs to get Jane, but as she went her heart jumped into her throat and she pressed her hand to her forehead. “ What will they say,” she murmured, “ when they find that she is wounded ? oh, what will they say ?”

Dr. Lilly, who had entered quietly and unperceived by the side door, was busy dressing the girl's arm when the dame appeared with the summons from Aaron, and it drew a deep sigh from poor Jenny's breast. “ 'Tisn't Knox I fear,” she said, “ but my

brother; his fury against David will be greater than ever. "Oh, why did you tell them?"

In a few words Mrs. M'Neil explained how the case stood, then as soon as the doctor had put Jane's arm in a sling, the latter followed the good woman below.

To say that Knox and Harry and Captain Broughton and all his crew were shocked and startled when she appeared, would but faintly express the scene. Aaron sprang toward her, Harry, his brow dark as a thunder-cloud took in at a glance what had happened and crying, "The British have drawn her blood! Vengeance! Vengeance!" rushed out of the house, while the sailors exclaimed, "where's she hit? where's she hit?"

"Thank God! It's only a flesh wound in the arm," said Aaron, presently turning toward them and speaking in a tremulous voice.

"Oh then cheer up, lads!" cried Broughton. "Only chipped a splinter off the topsail yard: I feared she might be hulled," thumping his chest as he spoke. Then gently taking her left hand, while his rough, weather-beaten face softened and a tear glistened in his eye, "brave girl," he continued, "it's not often a man meets the like of you; you're built of sound timber every inch, and you're not afraid of stormy weather. I came here to thank you for bringing us those powder-horns. I hail from Marblehead, to-morrow I ought to be on the ocean, but I couldn't heave anchor till I'd seen you again and thanked you."

Jane, while he was speaking, gazed frankly at him and looked so beautiful that the sailor could not bear to release her hand.

"Would you object to a little noise?" he continued, with a grin, which was imitated by the seven faces behind him. "You're pale, but a little noise wouldn't hurt you?"

"As if you didn't make enough when you banged on the door awhile ago," put in Mrs. M'Neil, squinting at him.

"Ha, ha ! that was only a gentle breeze, my good woman ; here lads, let's give her a hurricane."

In an instant the crew doffed their hats, then at a signal from their chief three huzzas were given for Jane M'Crea, such as Buckman's tavern had never heard before and has never heard since : The widow clapped her hands to her ears : Mr. Woodbury ran into the passage-way ; even Knox was startled, for a great piece of plaster rattled down on his head and the whole house trembled.

"That's no landman's cheer," exclaimed the mariner, " we caught it from the sea and the wild winds ; it's the music of Cape Hatteras and the Bay of Biscay." Then after a pause, during which he eyed the girl intently, " But now," he continued, " it's time for me to slip my cable ; the pretty craft needs rest ; you've been among the breakers to-day and you ought to be left to enjoy smooth water. So good-by, and pleasant dreams to you, my witch." With this he shook her hand, then nodding to Aaron and the widow, he opened the door and made his crew a sign to pass out. But he did not follow them immediately, and as he lingered on the threshold he again fixed his eyes on the young woman. Then in a tone earnest and sad, " I may never visit these parts again," he said, " so don't take offence if I set you down in my logbook as the prettiest craft I ever met ; yes, you're perfect from keel to sky-sail ; lucky's the fellow who captures you , and I wish you every joy on earth, and so does my crew."

Here he turned away, but before the door closed you heard the chorus answer—" we do, we do !"

As soon as they were gone Knox drew Jane aside, and for a few minutes they spoke together in undertones. One expressed his unbounded joy that she had not been killed, while the other wept and lamented her brother's unforgiving mood. " Harry will hate poor David more than ever," Jane sobbed ; " oh, Aaron, try your best to soothe him. What is his warm heart worth if he gives way so to his temper ? I'm sure it's not David's fault that I got wounded."

"I shall do my utmost to appease him," returned her guardian; "I'll have another serious talk with Harry this very night, for he is going to sleep at my house." With this, Knox pressed her hand, bade her cheer up, then having taken leave of the Ancient and Mrs. M'Neil, sought his mother's cottage.

As soon as he was gone Jane withdrew to her bedroom; Mr. Woodbury and the widow followed her example, and in less than half an hour the last lamp in the village was extinguished. The weary minute-men were asleep; even to the heart-broken women who had lost their husbands, sons, and brothers came a little feverish rest.

But during the solemn hours, while the moon was shining on Lexington Green, and while the dogs sat baying around a gory spot in the middle of it, a hundred horsemen, dispatched by the ever-faithful Warren, were speeding through the Province, rousing as they went the people out of their sleep, and carrying to the Penobscot, the Potomac, the lakes, and the sea, the news that the Revolution had begun.

CHAPTER III.

THREE days have passed since the battle of Lexington—days of mourning and of excitement. Everywhere, not only in Massachusetts but as far as the swift messengers have carried the news, the people are thoroughly aroused; and on stone walls as well as nailed against the most conspicuous trees along the highways are handbills* with coffins on them, giving an account of the events of the nineteenth of April.

Aaron Knox's efforts to bring Harry M'Crea to a calmer frame of mind have not been successful. "David Jones may have been among the grenadiers who wounded my sister," the latter would say; "you

* One of these handbills is preserved in Mass. Hist. Soc.

will not tell me where he has gone ; how do you know that he was not with them ? ”

To Jane the youth had not once opened his lips, and we may imagine how she suffered. Whenever she went out for a stroll she heard a voice crying, “ They have drawn her blood—Vengeance ! Vengeance ! ”

Billy Smith alone remained quiet, and passed most of the time in his cabin ; at which Mrs. M’Neil did marvel greatly, for she had expected that he would not delay popping the question. But this he had not the face to do. She might believe now in his courage—and not unwilling to have her think of him, Billy kept his old hat hung on a nail outside the cabin door, where she might view it from her window—but since Jane M’Crea knew how really base his conduct had been, and especially since she had so kindly promised to keep it a secret, he did not want to try her generosity too much by imposing himself on the widow. “ Plenty of time,” he would say to himself, “ She’s sure to keep : I’ll wait and win Miss Jenny’s esteem before I ask her to marry me.” Then he would end his soliloquy with an oath and something like, “ Why didn’t the Lord run me in a different mould ? ”

At this moment—twelve o’clock, the third day after the battle—the bell of the meeting-house in Lexington is solemnly tolling, and Mr. Smith is making ready to join the crowd which has gathered around a trench dug on the Green. Across the fields—by unfrequented paths—along the high road—afoot, on horseback, and in wagons you still see people coming. Josiah Woodbury, fitted out by Jane M’Crea in a new drab colored suit, with bright silver buckles to his shoes, is likewise preparing to go to the funeral. In fact he is quite ready to leave the house and is only waiting for Jane, who has passed a restless night, and does not move with her accustomed spirit ; and who, moreover, is obliged to depend a great deal on Mrs. M’Neil for her toilet, for she can not do everything with one arm in a sling.

At length all is in readiness for the ceremony to begin. The seven minute-men killed by Major Pitcairn's grenadiers were placed side by side in rude pine coffins; on each one's breast lay a few violets—the only flowers which had yet bloomed—and over them, gently unfolding in the breeze, was a Pine-tree flag. And while the bell kept tolling, women sobbed, men in undertones muttered vengeance, and once a girl's voice cried out, "Brother, brother, 'tis hard to part with you," and Lizzie Wyman knelt and gave the dead youth's brow a last kiss. Then when she rose from her knees Jane M'Crea helped Josiah Woodbury mount the pile of earth which overlooked the coffins and the crowd. The Ancient's wrinkled face was beaming with unwonted animation, and as he uncovered his hoary head, all eyes turned toward him, and the sobs and lamentations and the tolling of the bell ceased.

"My friends," he began, in a voice of great clearness and strength for one of his age, "I have sometimes wondered why the Lord spared me so long among you. Look at me—I am a hundred years old! Yes, twice fifty years since I was born! Oh think what I have seen in my life-time!" Here he paused a moment to gather up his thoughts, which had gone suddenly back, back into the far past.

"Yes," he continued, "I am a hundred years old. Why, I can remember Joseph Wadsworth of Hartford, the man who hid the Charter of Connecticut in the old oak tree when Sir Edmund Andros came to seize it. He was considered an eccentric man, this Wadsworth, and many people used to think he was mad. And why? Because he had faith in a vision he never saw come true. And what was that vision? 'Twas what I behold to-day; what every horseman, who rides through Lexington, repeats to us—A people aroused from their slumber and telling the world, 'we shall govern ourselves!'"

Here the speaker clasped his hands and turning his eyes toward the blue sky: "Oh Lord," he contin-

ued, "thanks, a thousand, thousand thanks for letting me live to see seventeen hundred and seventy five!"

Just here, Mrs. Parker, who had lost her only son in the fight, broke into a loud cry of lamentation, and as the Ancient heard it his eye kindled with a brighter glow, and extending his shrivelled hands: "Mother," he cried, "do not weep, but smile and rejoice. Jonas was a good son and you loved him; Jonas cannot be replaced: But mother do not weep; smile and rejoice and praise the Lord that you gave him birth. For when I saw the blood gush from his breast, I saw his patched and soiled garment change in an instant to something far, far more beautiful than the scarlet coats of the enemy—it became the uniform of a Martyr!"

At these words the heart-broken woman raised her head, the look of sorrow vanished from her face, and stretching out her arms, "Glory! Glory! to Thee, oh Lord," she cried, "Thy will be done."

"Aye, glory, glory!" pursued the Ancient, "The continent is rising at the news of the glorious day when these martyrs fell. The tidings of it are flying to the Potomac, and Patrick Henry's voice, with ten-fold power, will make it known in the loneliest valley of the Old Dominion. 'Twill ring through the Carolinas—'twill sweep over the Alleghanies, and Daniel Boone will hear it and rejoice as he travels through the wilderness. Aye, glory! glory to Thee, oh Lord, for sparing me till seventeen hundred and seventy-five."

Here he paused and frowned, then pointing his finger towards a little boy, who was watching a butterfly that hovered over the coffins, "Child!" he exclaimed, "child, be mindful of my words! keep your eyes and ears open; oh, listen well! when all who are assembled here on this solemn occasion, are gone but yourself—when your hair like mine will be white with old age, oh, how you'll wish that you had seized and kept fast every word I am uttering. Yes, the coming century will bend towards you when you tell of Lex-

ington; every whisper from your lips will be cherished like gold, and when you have told the world all you can remember, 'twill still cry out, 'Tell us more, tell us more of that day!'"

Then again addressing the multitude, "My friends," he continued, "I started well and hoped that I would be able to preach a good long discourse, but I feel the years pressing me down; my voice is growing weak; I must close. But before I do, let me express a hope that these hallowed dead may be allowed to rest under the sod of their native Green without any monument over them. Plant rosebushes and hollyhocks if you will, or a tree where the robins and sparrows may come to sing their morning and evening songs; but no granite—no marble—all that is vanity. Believe Josiah Woodbury, no monument lasts so long, none endures so well the ravages of Time, as that which has its foundation deep, deep in the heart of a people."

When he had finished speaking there was profound silence for about a minute. Precious minute! what heart-throbs! what soul-whispers! what a trial for our faith in Immortality! The worm wriggling on the edge of the trench is stretching its slimy length toward the coffins; instinctively the sexton shrinks from his task; the sweet sunbeams fall on the marble faces of the dead and give them a ghastly beauty, while the breeze spreads out the folds of the Pine tree flag, as if to let those who have perished the first in the cause of Independence have one last chance to view it. Then the coffins are hurriedly closed, the hammer drives down the nails; a few stifled sobs—clods of earth from the sexton's spade rattling and pattering into the deep, dark hole—and the funeral is over.

Jane M'Crea spoke scarcely a word to anybody all the rest of the day: She had been deeply affected. Most of the people followed her example and retired to their homes, while Josiah Woodbury went off by himself across the fields, Mrs. M'Neil did not ask where. As for Harry M'Crea, he, for the first time in his life, deliberately avoided Knox; and when the

latter towards sundown, approached and asked him to take a walk, the youth rudely turned his back and did not answer. Aaron of course felt deeply hurt by such treatment from one who had hitherto been his friend, and who, moreover, was Jane M'Crea's brother ; but it especially grieved him, because it took away all hope of deterring Harry from wreaking vengeance on David Jones if he met him.

And so Knox took a stroll this evening alone ; and as he wandered off he gave himself up to sad, pensive thoughts. Can we wonder at it ? How could he feel bright and cheerful ? He could not tear Jane M'Crea from his heart. Not only did she live in the same village, but he had accepted a trust which for months, perhaps for years, would bring him into close relation with her. " Oh, 'twas rash," he said to himself, " to take her under my care. But then David feared that Harry might go off to sea, as he threatened last week, and Mrs. M'Neil might get married again, while Mr. Woodbury cannot last much longer, though even if he did he would be a drag rather than a help to Jenny ; and so I don't wonder David wanted somebody on whom the orphan girl might depend in case of necessity. Still 'twas rash in me to accept the trust ! very, very ! May the Lord give me strength to keep my vow to David !"

Yet even as these last words were murmured the thought flashed across Aaron's mind that his friend might perhaps be killed during the war, and then—. But no ! His resolute will crushed the thought before he had time to dally with it. " No !" he said, " not even for the deep, undying love which I bear for Jane M'Crea do I wish her betrothed dead. Oh, would that I might flee—hide—bury myself where I'd never see her again ! And yet even if the Ocean rolled between us—if I went to the uttermost limit of the globe, could I forget her ?"

Just as he asked himself this question, he looked up and wondered where he was. Of course he knew the country around Lexington as well as anybody ; yet

there were small, sequestered spots—lost nooks as it were, which he had never visited, and now he was in one of these spots.

It was a flat, moss-covered rock, surrounded by cedar trees, with catbriars and hawthorn bushes growing between ; and so well was the place concealed from view, that but for the merest chance he might never have discovered it at all. Suddenly, while he was wondering where he could be, his eye rested on the figure of Josiah Woodbury leaning on his scythe beside a rosebush, which grew out of a crevice in the rock. The old man appeared startled and not altogether pleased to see an intruder.

“Why, Mr. Woodbury!” exclaimed Knox, “you’ve discovered a piece of the forest which I knew nothing of. How charming! one might almost fancy that some hand had planted these cedars and catbriars on purpose to make it more secluded.”

“Well, somebody did plant ’em, Aaron, long afore you were born,” returned the Ancient, “I planted ’em.”

“Indeed! And pray—” here Knox paused, something in Mr. Woodbury’s look told him that there was a secret reason for his having done such a thing which he would rather not reveal. And during the pause the Ancient sighed, then drawing his sleeve across his eyes, he asked where Jane M’Crea was; and when Aaron told him that when he had last seen her, she was at home reading her Bible, “Ah,” continued the old man, “what a sweet, dear girl she is! I’d ’ave been in the county poor-house but for her. They call her ‘The Pride of Lexington;’ that isn’t a half good enough name. Oh, Aaron, my boy, I do hope you and she will make a match. David Jones is a fine youth, yes, uncommon fine and handsome, and I like him very much, for he’s so respectful and willing to let me have his arm to get across the stone-walls; but he’s took the wrong side in this war, and some think he was with the King’s troops t’other day—so I’m sure Jenny won’t have him. She’s too true an American!”

Poor Mr. Woodbury! little did he dream how his

words were cutting into Knox's heart. It was now the young man's turn to change the subject, and in an abrupt, nervous way—and quite forgetful of what he was about, he asked the Ancient what brought him to this lonely nook in the woods.

"Because 'tis the spot where I last gazed on one whom I loved with a love which I cannot express," was the solemn answer. "Oh, Aaron, you don't love Jane M'Crea more than I loved Phebe Reed. She died seventy years ago—when I was a young man. We were to have been married the very next week." At these words a tear dropped on the rosebush.

"And you buried her here?"

"Well 'twas here she disappeared from my view; in this crevice of the rock she disappeared, and as she was always fond of flowers I put a rosebush over her; this one is a descendant of the first which I planted."

"It must indeed be a sacred spot to you," continued Aaron; "sacred, but very sad."

"Sad? oh, no! True, the tears will come—but it isn't a sad spot." Then with a flush on his withered cheek and an unwonted brightness in his eye, "To come here quickens my faith in Immortality. Phebe—my dear, dear Phebe, the girl I knew and loved in my youth—dead? Gone to make soil to nourish this bush? Aaron, my soul strikes at the thought as you would strike at a rattlesnake. True, if I sank a crowbar here two feet and a few inches, it might come to something hard which isn't the rock: my Phebe's bones? Oh, no! only the shell that bound her. The chrysalis opened and Phebe flew away."

"Seventy years ago!" murmured Knox, shaking his head.

"Yes, my boy, seventy years ago. And her face I can see at this moment as plainly as I see you, and I hear her voice. Forget Phebe?" Then after a pause, "well, yes I might forget her; at least the vision might fade away. Many persons not so old as Josiah Woodbury get into second childhood. But if I did, that would not really be forgetting her; a

memory never dies. It may fall asleep in some remote corner of the brain, and after long years be awakened by the odor of a flower, the song of a bird—or it may never again awaken in this life. But, Aaron, a memory never dies; it goes with our soul to Immortality.”

Here the Ancient remained for about a minute silently gazing at the rosebush, then, with an expression of intense joy, which Knox never forgot, “Oh, I’m going soon,” he exclaimed, “can’t stay much longer; soon I’ll be with Phebe. Lord Jesus, why are thy chariot wheels so long a-coming?”

“We shall miss you very much,” said Aaron, deeply affected by the old man’s earnestness. “Oh, very, very much.”

“Stop, don’t say that, my boy,” continued the other, “you are too young to look back at anything. I don’t expect to be remembered. Jenny and you may perhaps talk about me for a few days after I’m hidden away; then the memory of Josiah Woodbury will fall asleep as it should. In after years, when she passes by a patch of calamus root, or when you see an old man carrying a rusty scythe, the memory of the Ancient may awaken and you may talk about me again. But I advise you not; better always look ahead; the past is nothing but a mite—this world is only the beginning of our existence.”

“How differently you talk from other folks,” said Knox; “I could listen to you for hours without growing tired. Pray, don’t go home yet,”—the old man had shouldered his scythe—“speak on, tell me something else; impart to me a little more of the wisdom which your hundred years have given you.”

“Well, that isn’t much,” said Mr. Woodbury. “But since you will have me say a few words more afore I quit the rock, I’ll just tell you three or four things which I didn’t believe when I was your age: The first is, that the longest life on earth is very short, it passes like a dream; so whatever you have to do, while you do it well, do it quickly, for there’s no time to lose.

The second is, that our really happy days are only few ; so when one of these sunny days comes along, hug it and make the most of it in a godly way, for you can't tell when you'll have another.

Third—to an old man like me, life is still as great a mystery as it is to a beardless youth ; so, Aaron, don't bother your head trying to understand what you weren't given power to understand. And lastly, and mark this well, for it's worth all the rest—be mindful of the words of Solomon, 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.' ”

Here the Ancient somewhat abruptly turned on his heel and left the rock. Aaron followed ; but neither of them spoke a word as they went back to the village. Josiah Woodbury, however, looked unusually cheerful, while Knox sighed and scarcely took his eyes off the path. “A memory never dies,” he kept repeating to himself ; “never dies. Jane M'Crea would follow me to the loneliest island of the sea ; She would haunt me in the deepest wilderness. So why leave here ? No, no, I'll keep my vow and guard her safe for David. Verily, our happy days are few—mine have gone.”

CHAPTER IV.

“SO you dreamt last night about the Hessian officer ?” said Mr. Woodbury one evening, as he and Jane M'Crea were seated together under the pine trees on the hill. “Yes,” replied the young woman with an anxious, worried look ; “and the trees were sighing and moaning just as they are at this moment : 'twas a horrid dream and has left an impression on me which I cannot get over.”

“Well, now really I didn't think you were so nervous,” said the old man, gazing affectionately at her. “But I fear I'm to blame for it ; I oughtn't to have told you about Cotton Mather's prophetic mirror ;

it has put queer notions into your head about fate and predestination, and now here you are troubled by a dream. Pray, Jenny, what was this dream?"

"I would rather not tell it, sir; I must even try and not think of it; I have crushed his rosebud forever," and the last word *Forever* was spoken in a loud, earnest voice, and as it floated up into the air it seemed to be repeated by other voices, until it died away among the sighing of the pine-tops.

Then after remaining silent a few minutes, she drew from her pocket a miniature which she gazed fondly at, then showed to the Ancient. "That's David," she said; "when I'm at home it hangs on the wall near my bed—when I go out, I take it with me."

"Well, 'tis a capital likeness," said her companion, bending over it; "you've not flattered the boy a bit, no, not a bit. He's uncommon handsome, and with such a merry look, and his hair twists and curls like so many little waves." Then after a pause, and shaking his head, "what a pity David took the wrong side! Folks are saying hard things about him."

"I'd have given all the world if he had remained with us," said Jane. "But his father was an officer in the British army, and David loved and revered his father, and wanted to tread in his footsteps."

"And he has gone to Boston, no doubt; and perhaps was with the king's troops t'other day?"

"Of course not," rejoined the young woman, in a tone more severe than she had ever before used to her aged friend. Then bowing her head she spoke not another word for several minutes, while Mr. Woodbury gazed at her with a look of admiration and wonder. "What a girl she is!" he said to himself. "Wounded in the first battle for Independence; yet as unwilling to stay at home and nurse her arm as a bird is to stay in its cage; and loved passionately by two young men, who are both as good as gold, and who are such true friends that they haven't quarrelled over her. Until now I felt sure that she'd take Knox; but this portrait of David looks suspicious. And yet no—impossible—

I can't believe that she'd give her heart to one who has joined the enemy; other girls might, but not Jane M'Crea."

While he was thus talking to himself about her, she suddenly rose, and gazing toward the village: "Hark!" she exclaimed, "I hear shouting; there may be news from Boston. Let's go and see!" Accordingly the Ancient got up from the log where he had been sitting, slowly and with difficulty, for the girl usually helped him—but now that she was wounded, he would not accept any assistance; then, side by side, they went back to the Ordinary.

Their way lay across the field which Harry had been ploughing for corn, and Jane wondered if he would do any more work this season: there was the plough just as he had left it, and yonder were the oxen roving about with the greatest delight, and no doubt astonished at their long holiday.

From the field they passed into the garden by a narrow gate, which stood close to the bee-hives—so close that Mr. Woodbury quickened his pace, although Jane assured him that the bees would not sting if they were let alone; and so on by a pretty path, hedged with boxwood, to the side door of the Ordinary.

Here the girl stopped and allowed her companion to enter without her, then turning away she approached Billy Smith, who was sitting on the threshold of his cabin cleaning his gun.

He hung his head as she drew near, for he had not yet recovered from the mortification which her discovery of his cowardice had caused him, then suddenly looking up, as if a bright idea had struck him, and with such a comic air that she had to smile, "Miss Jenny," he said, "how's your arm?"

"Healing fast," answered the girl, puzzled as well as amused by his expression.

"Well, that's good news, and now let me ask you something else; suppose you knew a chap that was always getting drunk, suddenly give up his rum and take to milk; or, suppose this—suppose a chap was

given to swearin' and cussin' everytime he opened his mouth, so that he was a scandal to the community where he lived, and that all at once he lost his foul tongue and became mild and godly in his speech—and this change all brought about without going to a single prayer-meeting—what would you think?"

"'Twould rejoice me exceedingly, Mr. Smith, and I'd call it a wonderful Providence—a miracle almost."

"Well now then," continued Billy, closing one of his eyes, "I wasn't run in the mould of a hero and don't make no complaint about it: Take things as they come—what I am I am, is my motto: Nevertheless, look what I'm doing—cleaning out the barrel of my gun till it's like a new penny—doing violence to my nature—trying to improve the original pattern on which the Almighty made me—getting ready to fight and die like a hero. And now if this isn't a miracle, it's next door to one anyhow."

"May the Lord give you strength to keep to your good resolve," said Jane, doing her best to look serious; "and anxious as I am to learn the cause of the shouting which I heard a little while ago, I turned aside on purpose to congratulate you on your present work; your rifle certainly appears very clean and bright; and you must buy a new hat and I'll put an Eagle feather in it for you, and—"

"No, no, Miss Jenny, don't talk about a new hat; I wan't this old one with the hole through it: they say a chap never breaks a bone twice in the same place, and I can't believe that I'll ever get shot through the head if I wear this hat."

At this the girl laughed then turned to go away, when he begged her to stop another moment. "Miss Jenny," he continued, "in old times folks went to the wars with helmets and breastplates, didn't they? How heavy them things must have been! Don't think I'd care to be weighed down in that style."

"They must indeed have been exceedingly cumbersome," answered Jane. "We fight very differently now-a-days."

"Very differently," repeated Billy with a slight tremor which the other did not perceive. "Wonder if we'll ever come back to breast-plates?" The girl was about to answer when she heard Knox's voice on the tavern porch, so, after once more expressing to Mr. Smith the pleasure which she felt at the conquest he had achieved over himself, she hurried away.

She found her guardian surrounded by a number of men, half of them strangers, who were listening to something which he was reading. "This is Warren's Proclamation," said Aaron, the moment he recognized her step. "I'll begin again, for, Jenny, it's worth hearing." Then in a loud clear tone he read the following:

GENTLEMEN,—

The barbarous murders on our innocent Brethren on Wednesday, the 19th instant, has made it absolutely necessary that we immediately raise an army to defend our wives and our children from the butchering hands of an inhuman soldiery, who, incensed at the obstacles they meet with in their bloody progress, and enraged at being repulsed from the field of slaughter will, without the least doubt, take the first opportunity in their power to ravage this devoted country with fire and sword. We conjure you, therefore, that you give all assistance possible in forming an army. Our all is at stake. Death and devastation are the certain consequences of delay; every moment is infinitely precious; an hour lost may deluge your country in blood, and entail perpetual slavery upon the few of your posterity who may survive the carnage.

We beg and entreat you, as you will answer it to your country, to your consciences, and, above all, as you will answer to God himself, that you will hasten and encourage by all possible means the enlistment of men to form the army, and send them forward to Headquarters at Cambridge with the expedition which the vast importance and instant urgency of the affair demands.

JOSEPH WARREN, President P. C. **

"Warren, you must know, is President of our Provincial Congress during Mr. Hancock's absence," said Aaron.

"Well, we could not have a better President," returned Jane, "and I hope the country will respond to his call."

"It will. Already twenty thousand men are gathered around Boston under General Artemus

* Lossing, Vol. I. p. 533.

Ward, and more are flocking there every day. Many of these are going to join his standard." As Knox spoke he glanced round at the crowd who seemed to be admiring the girl. Presently Jane's eyes met those of a stout, rough looking individual with trowsers tucked into his boots, hair slightly tinged with grey, and nose rather red at the tip. But rough as he appeared, he had an honest face, which brightened when he saw her looking at him.

"You're Jane M'Crea, I guess?" he said, "the gal who 'fit' so well on the 19th? Arm any better?"

"Oh, yes—much better," replied Jane, blushing. "I'm almost ashamed to have it in a sling."

"And soon you'll be ready for another battle, good, good!" Then with a wink at Aaron. "Do you know, miss, that we're going to carry your lover away. But there's no law against your following him to the field—your presence will give us all pluck and under your eye he'll rise to be a General."

"Yes, she must come," spoke a dozen voices. "She'll carry our Pine tree flag. And by and by we'll have a wedding in camp. Ha, ha, ha!"

"You command this company, I presume?" said Jane with a look of embarrassment which only Knox could explain.

"Command 'em? Ha, ha! I don't believe the devil could do that. They're stubborn as mules—unless when they take it into their heads of their own accord to obey. Then they're willing enough. No, I don't command 'em, I persuade 'em. So t'other day, while I was at work on my farm in Connecticut, news came of how you and the minute-men had whipped the Redcoats and at once I quit my plow—never even stopped to put on a clean shirt—but just called out to as many as could hear me to follow, and as you see we are already not a great ways from the army. And we'd have 'jined' Artemus Ward afore this, only that we wanted to visit the spot where first blood was spilt, and have a glimpse of you. Israel Putnam is great on gals, and don't scold me for saying so."

Here he patted her cheek, then turned and went into the tavern, declaring that his mouth was as dry as a Cape Cod sand hill, and that he must wet it with something.

At which Mrs. M'Neil threw open a window and called Billy Smith to come help at the bar. The rest of the volunteers followed their leader, and in a few minutes the widow and her lover had as much as they could do to deal out the liquor. Mr. Woodbury likewise joined them, for he had been acquainted with Putnam when the latter kept tavern in Brooklyn, Connecticut, and they both seemed delighted to meet each other again.

"I don't often indulge," said the Ancient, throwing away his bit of calamus root. "But I must drink your health, Israel."

"And right glad am I to see you, and must drink your'n," returned his friend. "'Tisn't often I meet a man that harks back to king Philip's war."

"Well, it's a long stretch, sure enough; but I guess, Israel, that if nothing happens you'll take a good peep into the next century. You're lookin' 'mazin' smart."

"Well, I'm turning fifty-eight and the white hairs are coming. But as you have remarked I'm in tip-top health—thanks to the Lord and regular drinks."

"Aye, that's just it," pursued the Ancient. "Keeping tavern has taught you the benefit of regularity in your liquor. I never believed in taking rum afore breakfast and late at night and at odd times during the day—whenever the bottle happened to be in sight. But a glass at noon when the horn blows and on a Sabbath morn just afore you start for meeting, will keep life in a man better than all the doctor's drugs. It helps him over rough places—keeps him from stumbling—and I'm satisfied nothing has kept my clock ticking so long as regular drinks."

"Well, I'm exactly of your opinion. What a pity it is more folks don't think as we do! The best Christian isn't the one who don't drink at all, but the

one who knows how to drink. Oh, I'd give anything if you'd accompany Miss M'Crea and her lover to camp, and preach your doctrine to the soldiers. Alas! too many of 'em don't know when to stop when they get near a bottle."

"True, intemperance is spreading, and some folks think that the world is getting so bad that it's coming to an end," returned Mr. Woodbury. "But I don't agree with 'em. In old times the laws were stricter and you were allowed to drink only just so much. But still there was full as much drinking then as now. Only Satan kept behind the door. For my part, I believe there's more good to be done by setting a good example and using kind words, than by keeping the selectmen watching folks."

"My ideas again," exclaimed Putnam, "and now here's your health!"

"And yours!" returned Mr. Woodbury, touching his friend's glass.

During the above conversation Knox had remained on the porch, talking with Jane M'Crea.

"Yes," said Aaron, with a proud look, "I have just received a commission to raise a company for Colonel Brewer's regiment; and it won't take twenty-four hours to get all the lads I want. And I'll try my best to persuade Harry to join it and come with us to Boston."

"Do, do!" exclaimed Jane. "And then he'll be sure not to meet David. Oh, how glad I am that you have a commission! Although 'twill take you from me, I still cannot help rejoicing for your sake—and besides Boston is not so far but that I may visit my guardian now and then. But, Aaron, read me the commission."

Here the young man drew a paper from his pocket and read as follows:

To Captain AARON KNOX—

Sir: You are to enlist a company of rangers, whereof Jonathan Brewer is Colonel. You are hereby empowered immediately to enlist a company to consist of fifty-nine able-bodied and effective men, including

sergeants, as soldiers in the Massachusetts service, for the preservation of American liberty, and cause them to muster as soon as possible.

JOSEPH WARREN, Chairman.*

Hardly had he finished reading, when from the north end of the village came a loud huzza, and looking round, Knox saw a number of strangers approaching. "More volunteers for Artemus Ward!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, and what tall fellows!" said Jane, "from the mountains, no doubt."

In a few minutes the new-comers reached the Ordinary, when a broad-shouldered man of perhaps thirty-five or thirty-six years of age, with a cap made of wild-cat skin, drawn far down over a mass of uncombed hair, and with a face as determined as Aaron's, only not quite so stern, pushed in front of his companions and curtly inquired if he was at Buckman's tavern.

While he was addressing Knox, the others gazed up at the comic sign board and laughing declared that if it was not the place they were seeking, they meant to put up at it for the night anyhow.

On receiving an affirmative answer to his question, the chief of the band passed into the house, giving Jane a searching glance as he went by her, then turning to take another look before those who were following him hid her from view.

Curious to learn who the strangers were, Knox and Jane likewise entered the bar-room, which they found so crowded that the girl was glad of a corner near the door, where Mr. Woodbury soon discovered her.

"Glad you've managed to squeeze in," said the old man. "But take care and not get your arm hurt. These lads are awful rough, even if they have good hearts. So take care now, for I'm going to bring you right into the middle of the room."

"Oh no, pray don't," said Jane. "I'm not afraid of getting hurt, nor ashamed to mingle with these

* See Frothingham's *Life of Warren*, p. 469.

honest fellows, but I'd rather be let stay here where I can see well enough all that goes on."

While she was speaking with Mr. Woodbury her brother came in; but without seeming to notice her, he pushed his way up to Knox, who had already made the acquaintance of the man that had addressed him on the porch, and with whom he was now conversing in the most friendly way, while Putnam stood by listening and every now and then shrugging his shoulders as if he did not agree with what he heard.

But presently Aaron left the stranger and approached Jane M'Crea, whom Mr. Woodbury was still vainly urging to come forward and be admired. "That," said he, "is Ethan Allen, I have been talking with. He is just from the wild region called the New Hampshire Grants, which he so boldly defended against the claims of New York some five or six years ago."

"Oh, indeed!" exclaimed the young woman. "Then the fifty pounds reward which that province offered for the outlaw did not succeed in capturing him?"

"No. But those troubles will be all forgotten in the recent stirring events, and the disputed territory will no doubt become a province of itself. Allen thinks 'twill be called New Connecticut or Vermont. I like the last name best."

Here their attention was attracted by a movement in the crowd and Mr. Woodbury was seen extending his hands as if striving to prevent a collision between Putnam and Allen. Never had the Ancient appeared so excited before. "Don't quarrel!" he cried, "don't quarrel!" At the sound of his voice, and perhaps moved by his venerable air, the tumult suddenly ceased, to the great relief of Mrs. M'Neil, who feared that her tumblers as well as her windows and chairs would be broken if there was a row.

"You have a big job on your hands, my friends," exclaimed the old man; "and there'll be fighting enough for all of you without falling out among yourselves."

"He is right," spoke Allen, "nor did I mean to hint a word against Israel Putnam's courage; I've heard too much about him for that. He has had more bullets whistle by his head than I have and his record in the French war* is known to all of you. Nevertheless, I repeat what I said a few moments ago, that I don't believe it's necessary for every volunteer to rendezvous at Boston. General Ward has already more soldiers than he can manage. No, I'm not a-going to whip the British by cooping 'em up like chickens in a place where they cannot escape from. I don't say there's anything unmanly in laying siege to a town; all I say is that Ethan Allen hasn't got the patience for such sort of work."

At these words Jane M'Crea glanced at Aaron, and as his eyes met hers, the color fled from their cheeks, each dreaded what the bold mountaineer might say next.

"I came here," continued the speaker, "to beat up more recruits; I don't want all to enlist from my part of the country: Massachusetts and Connecticut can have a share in what I'm going to do."

"Well, well, what is it? Don't keep us waiting; What wild scheme have you got into your head?" exclaimed Putnam, in a tone very like a growl.

"Ha! wild scheme, indeed! You'll not say that a month hence. Well, I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to strike where I'm not expected—swoop down on the British like an eagle from the clouds. Who'll follow?"

Here Allen threw his eye on the eager faces around him, and smiled when he heard the shout, "We'll all go! We'll all go!"

"'Twill be just the work for you, young man," he continued, placing his hand on Harry M'Crea's shoulder, "Aye, you'll make your mark; I can tell true flint when I see it."

Once more Aaron and Jane glanced at each other.

* The war between France and England, known in Europe as the seven years war, extended to the colonies of the two nations in North America, and was called the French and Indian war.

"I will pray," continued the latter, "'Tis all I can do. Harry is determined to follow Ethan Allen—something tells me where he's going—already I hear him pronouncing the word—Oh David! David!"

"Now then, fill up your glasses—and hear my wild scheme; "fill up, fill up;" exclaimed the mountaineer.

At once Mrs. M'Niel and Mr. Smith stretched out their arms, and with a bottle in each hand, they had enough to do during the next five minutes. Putnam, too true an American to refuse to drink success to any expedition in the interest of the colonies, allowed Billy to replenish his mug; Mr. Woodbury did the same. But when Smith had elbowed his way through the crowd to Aaron Knox, the latter hesitated.

"No, drink, drink," whispered Jane M'Crea, "not even for David's sake would I have Ethan Allen fail—so drink and God bless our cause."

"Well, a drop, only a drop," said Knox.

Billy did as he was told, and poured about a thimble-full into his tumbler; then in a low voice—"where d'you think," he said, "a chap'll be apt to see the most fighting? Had I better go to Boston or jine Allen? I want to do all I can for my country."

"I can't answer until I hear where he is going to," was Aaron's response.

"Well, that we'll soon know," said Billy. But, oh, dear, how anxious I feel! I'm gettin' in a fever."

At length the widow and her lover withdrew to their places behind the bar; every man had been helped. Harry M'Crea's eyes were flashing, for the bold stroke which Allen contemplated exactly suited his fiery nature, and moreover, his sister's troubled look had not escaped him. "Ha," he answered, "David Jones is now in Boston—She fears we may go to where he is." There was likewise a glow on Mr. Woodbury's cheek—Putnam cleared his throat—Aaron felt a soft hand press his—how Jane's heart was beating!

"All ready?" cried Allen. "Yes," shouted the multitude.

"Then here's to victory at Ticonderoga!" "Oh my

God," cried Jane M'Crea, falling back against the wall, "It is fate!"

Then while the excited volunteers were emptying their tankards, she softly opened the door and glided out.

Her absence did not long escape the notice of the Ancient, who presently returned to the corner where she had been standing, in order to make another attempt to bring her forward.

Poor Mr. Woodbury! He was so fond of his Jenny that we cannot wonder at his desire to show her off to the crowd; yes, he would have had her place herself in the middle of the room, and sing the Song of Liberty. "Heavens! what a picture she'd be!" he muttered, "with her arm in a sling—her black hair flung loose—and with a voice that's like no other voice but my Phebe's!"

"She left a moment ago," said Knox, in response to the old man's inquiring look, "Don't go after her."

"Well no, I'll not trouble her; she isn't well," returned Mr. Woodbury. "Hasn't been herself since the day of the fight. Hav'n't heard her laugh once since then. No, I won't ask her to come back, but still I'll go find her." With this he went off in search of his pet, leaving Knox watching Harry M'Crea, who was now in close conversation with Allen.

Presently some one called out for a song, and Billy Smith—who by the way had resolved to lay siege to Boston, instead of storming Ticonderoga—came forward and prepared to sing Lydia Fisher's jig, a very popular melody in those days, whereat Mrs. M'Niel, threw him an approving squint; then cocking his hat on one side and standing so that the bullet-hole might be towards Putnam and Allen, he thus began:

"Lucy Locket lost her pocket,
Lydia Fisher found it;
Not a bit of money in it,
Only binding round it."

He was about to proceed and give the whole song—the air of which, as the reader will observe, is the same

as Yankee Doodle—when Allen stopped him and in a rough tone bade him strike up something more inspiring. "That'll do for husking parties and bees," exclaimed the mountaineer; "Give us something to make us think of gunpowder."

"Gunpowder!" and the quiver in Billy's voice was but faintly concealed, while his eyes closed for an instant. "Well, yes, I will." Then pointing to a smoked and fly-blown book which hung over the chimney-piece, "Mrs. M'Neil," he said, "I'll thank you to chuck me the Almanack."

The dame obeyed, not, however, with much alacrity, for she thought Ethan Allen a boor from the curt way he had interrupted her lover, and felt very like telling him so.

The book which Mr. Smith now held up before his eyes was the Boston Almanack for 1770. On the title page was a portrait of James Otis, Jr., the fearless author of the pamphlet—"Rights of the British Colonists asserted"—one of the sentences of which—"If we are not represented we are slaves"—had become household words in the land.

"Hush, hush," said Harry M'Crea to a couple of Green Mountain boys, who were laughing at poor Billy. "Keep quiet till the chorus—then give your tongues full swing."

Mr. Smith now blew his nose, glanced at Mrs. M'Neil, then after feeling the bullethole to make sure that it was turned in the right direction, he began the *Massachusetts Song of Liberty* : *

Come swallow your bumpers, ye Tories and roar,
That the sons of fair freedom are hamper'd once more ;
But know that no cut-throats our spirits can tame,
Nor a host of oppressors shall smother the flame,
In Freedom we're born, and, like sons of the brave,
Will never surrender,
But swear to defend her,
And scorn to survive, if unable to save.

* Composed by Mrs. Mercy Warren, sister of James Otis, Jr.

Our grandsires, bless'd heroes, we'll give them a tear,
 Nor sully their honors by stooping to fear,
 Through deaths and through dangers their trophies they wear,
 We dare be their rivals, nor will be outdone.
 In Freedom we're born, etc.

Let tyrants and minions presume to despise,
 Encroach on our rights and make Freedom their prize,
 The fruits of their rapine they never shall keep,
 Though vengeance may nod, yet how short is her sleep!
 In Freedom we're born, etc.

The tree which proud Haman for Mordecai reared,
 Stands recorded, that virtue endanger'd is spar'd;
 That rogues whom no bounds and no laws can restrain,
 Must be stripp'd of their honors and humbled again.
 In Freedom we're born, etc.

Our wives and our babes, still protected shall know,
 Those who dare to be free, shall forever be so;
 On these arms and these hearts they may safely rely,
 For in freedom we'll live, or like heroes we'll die.
 In Freedom we're born, etc.

Ye insolent tyrants! who wish to enthrall;
 Ye minions, ye placemen, pimps, pensioners, all,
 How short is your triumph, how feeble your trust,
 Your honor must wither and nod to the dust.
 In Freedom we're born, etc.

Then join hand in hand, brave Americans all,
 To be free is to live, to be slaves is to fall;
 Has the land such a dastard as scorns not a lord,
 Who dreads not a fetter much more than a sword?
 In Freedom we're born, etc.

"That's well sung all around," said Allen, with an approving glance at his followers, then clapping Billy on the shoulder, "your voice, my friend," he continued, "is just the voice for a soldier: 'Halt! who goes there?'—'Ready, take aim, fire!—eh, Mr. Smith? Don't these words make your heart jump for joy? Ha! ha! lots of fighting ahead!'" Presently he slipped his hand from Billy's shoulder and grasping the poor fellow's arm as if in a vice—"you're coming to Ticonderoga? eh?" he said.

"Nothing would please me better," replied Billy. "But I'm sworn to go to Boston and—and I don't think

Captain Knox'll let me off, nor would I like to ask him."

"Well, since he's sworn to go to Boston he must go," said Mrs. M'Neil; "but I bet he'll do more blood spillin' there than if he 'jined' you."

Allen made no reply to this caustic remark, but went off to find Knox and try and persuade him to change his mind, when Israel Putnam drew him back. "Allen," said he, "haven't you got men enough for your expedition? All my lads have given me up to follow you, so let Mr. Smith and his captain alone or I'll quarrel."

Allen gazed a moment at Putnam as if to see if he was in earnest, then turning the matter off in a joke, laughed and asked him to take another drink.

And so things went on for about an hour in Buckman's tavern; the lamp was lit—the smoke of countless pipes filled the room like a heavy mist—rum bottle after rum bottle was passed around—cheers were given for everybody and everything—toasts of all kinds were drank—Billy Smith, with his finger stuck through the bullet hole in his hat, giggled, groaned, danced and sang alternately, and when Allen remarked that the ball must have passed very close to his skull, he laughed louder than ever and declared that a miss was as good as a mile, then went on to describe the battle of Lexington in such vivid language, that the other cursed his bad luck for not having been able to take part in it,

But the jolliest scenes must come to an end, and at length the worthy dame who kept the Ordinary informed her guests that it was time for them to withdraw. Her wishes were complied with after a little grumbling, and Putnam locking arms with Ethan Allen went up to an apartment in the second story, while the rest of the company found resting places here and there along the floor of the bar-room, and in Billy Smith's cabin.

We wish them pleasant dreams and may they get all the sleep they can, for by daybreak they must be

off on their daring expedition to the shores of lake Champlain.

But before Knox retired he made one last effort to bring Harry M'Crea to reason. The youth, however, was still stubbornly resolved to have his own way, and spoke of David Jones more bitterly than ever. "Well, beware!" said Aaron, "you may do in a moment what a whole lifetime cannot undo."

These were his last words as he turned to go to his home. Many things will happen before they meet again.

CHAPTER V.

HARRY M'CREA'S heart beat high next morning as he marched away from Lexington with Ethan Allen's band, which, counting those whom the mountaineer had brought with him and those who had deserted Israel Putnam, numbered exactly two hundred and fourteen men.

They felt as the youth himself did, in enthusiastic spirits; they were going to strike an unexpected blow for the cause of the colonies, and as they tramped along with brisk step, the woods which line the high road echoed with songs and laughter.

Their chief took a strong fancy for Harry and most of the time made him walk by his side: "My expedition," he said, "just suits my nature. It has the public sanction of no assembly; although I spoke about it to several members of the Connecticut Legislature who out of their own purses have advanced a thousand dollars to help me along. But the money will not have been thrown away if Ticonderoga* falls into my hands, for the cannon and powder will prove of great use in laying siege to Boston."

Allen likewise spoke about the young woman whom he had seen at Buckman's tavern, with her arm in a

* From Cheonderoga: Iroquois word signifying sounding-waters. Applied to the rush of water at outlet of Lake George.

sling, and when Harry informed him that she was his sister and that she was betrothed to one who had lately joined the enemy, he expressed in no mild terms his horror of such a match and cried—"by Heaven, if she were a sister of mine, I'd not let her become the wife of a Britisher."

As the reader may imagine, these words were not calculated to soften the youth's feelings towards David, and when he recalled Jane's troubled look the evening before, while Allen was proposing the toast to victory, he did not doubt that her betrothed had gone to the very fortress they were now marching against.

"Yes," he murmured "'tis there the base wretch, the traitor has fled. Oh, Jenny, what a fool you are! But it shall not be—never!" Nor did the fatigue of the long day's march lessen his wrath, it seemed rather to increase it, and when he lay down that night to sleep he had a wild dream in which he saw David Jones with a number of grenadiers setting fire to Lexington.

The following day Ethan Allen's little army was strengthened by a number of fresh volunteers, who joined at different places along the road, and by the time Allen reached Bennington he had two hundred and seventy men under his command.

At this town he made a halt of five or six hours, in order to rest, and to obtain a supply of powder, then pushed on to Castleton, fourteen miles east of Whitehall, where he arrived on the evening of May the seventh.

At Castleton he summoned a council of war, which in reality was more like a town meeting. A chairman was appointed, and those who till now had of their own free will followed him, were asked to vote 'who should continue to have the supreme command.

"I think I ought to be leader," spoke Ethan Allen, "for I beat up the most of you: you wouldn't have come if I hadn't talked you into it. However, I want you all to express your minds freely, so the question may be settled now afore we proceed any further towards the enemy."

Accordingly, it was put to vote and Allen was elected by an overwhelming majority. James Easton, who had brought an addition of thirty-eight recruits to the force, was chosen second leader, and Seth Warner third.

After this important question had been decided, the meeting voted that Captain Herrick should take thirty men and proceed to Whitehall (a small settlement at the head of lake Champlain) where he was to seize whatever boats he might find, and floating them down to Shoreham, which is only two miles from Ticonderoga, there rejoin the main body.

Thus far everything had gone on harmoniously enough and Allen was telling Harry M'Crea that he intended to make him his aid-de-camp, when an incident happened which threatened to turn the assemblage into a riotous mob.

This was the sudden arrival of a stranger with a commission from the Massachusetts Committee of Safety, giving him authority over the whole expedition. His appearance was anything but that of a frontiersman, and perhaps 'twas this which caused Allen's lip to curl even before the new comer had proclaimed his business. His age might have been thirty-five or so, and his manner that of a polished gentleman, while his nose, which was long and slightly curved, was quite thin at the tip, and as it poked out from under his well-powdered wig, gave him a shrewd scheming air, which added to a calm and confident address marked him as no ordinary man.

"Well, what's your name?" demanded Ethan Allen, in a coarse tone. "Damn your commission, what's your name?"

"Benedict Arnold," was the quiet but firm response, accompanied by a profound inclination of the head, as if in mock politeness to the interrogator. "I have a company of four hundred strong, two days journey South; but they are afoot, and I was too impatient to advance at their slow gait, so I hastened forward, as you see, to lead you to victory at Ticonderoga. But

we will do more than that, we will likewise seize Crown Point, then push on to the St. Lawrence and sing the Song of Liberty on the ramparts of Quebec."

"Fine words!" said Allen, with a scornful laugh, "what with your wig and gloves, methinks you'd do better in some snug parlor, than out in this wild region. The Committee of Safety must have been mad when they gave you a commission!"

"Well, we'll club our firelocks and go home, if any body but Ethan Allen commands us," spoke the Green Mountain boys.*

"Shove him off his horse," cried one of Easton's men. "No, let him alone," said Allen, "he can't do us any harm; "we'll fetch him along and make him nurse the wounded."

"Thanks," returned Arnold, with another sarcastic bow.

"Since my right to command is disputed, I shall press it no further, and crave only one favor of you, which is that you place me in the advance—give me the post of danger."

"Oh, you may join as a volunteer, no objection to that," said Allen with a sneer. "But you must walk like the rest of us."

Without deigning to answer this last remark, Arnold quietly dismounted, then having given his horse to the care of a servant whom he had brought with him, took his place beside Harry M'Crea.

The latter, who had maintained a strict silence during the discussion, was not sorry to find himself so close to the new recruit: There was something in Arnold's look which fascinated him. "I admire his patriotism," said the youth. "Let the others think of him what they like, I am sure he will always be in the front."

Nor was Arnold less captivated by Jane M'Crea's brother, whose calm gentlemanly behavior, while the rest were insulting him, had not escaped his eye.

"These fellows mean not all they say," whispered

* See Dawson's Battles of U. S. by Sea and Land.

Harry that evening, as he and Arnold sat warming themselves at the bivouac fire, while Easton, Warner and Allen were playing cards together near by. "You'll like them well enough when you know them better."

"I expect no smooth speech from barbarians," rejoined his companion, smiling. "If only they are brave, I shall be content. They deserve not the name of soldiers, however, and I fear General Artemus Ward, who is now commanding what is called the army of Boston, will have no easy task to make the clowns who are flocking to his standard, do their duty. Patriotism! Bah, 'tis love of adventure—hope of plunder, which fires the hearts of nine out of ten." Here he paused a moment, then shrugging his shoulders, "But ought I to find fault? How many who go forth singing the Song of Liberty, do it for liberty's sake? Ambition—the burning wish for high command—'tis that which fires our souls. You yourself, young and handsome, and I should judge not bred in the bush like those who are snoring or playing cards around us, may have left a happy home and set out on this expedition out of pure love for the cause; but you are a great exception."

"Do not praise me," said Harry, suddenly pressing his hand to his brow. "No, do not praise me." Then abruptly, and as if anxious to change the subject, "But now tell me," he continued, "your opinion of this enterprise: if successful, will it help us much in winning our independence?"

"Well, from the moment it first originated in my brain, three weeks ago," replied Arnold, "its importance has kept growing upon me. The capture of Ticonderoga and Crown Point, will give us the key of communication between New York and Canada, and may lead to the fall of Quebec." Then in a low bitter tone, "But I shall get no thanks for it. This Ethan Allen, who would enjoy himself full as much hunting catamounts, will be the triumphant hero—the honored patriot! Verily, I was not born under a lucky star."

To think that after writing to the Massachusetts Committee of Safety, and after urging Warren to address a letter to the New York Committee, setting forth the great value of these forts on the lakes—after enlisting four hundred men—in fact, after ploughing through all the hard stubble of fools' brains—I should at last find myself in the ranks!" *

"'Tis indeed discouraging," said Harry, "but you will have other chances."

"Oh I will; this war is not going to end in one year, nor in two, nor in three, and before it is over, by Heaven, the whole country shall know me." Then placing his hand on Harry's shoulder, "but now tell me," he continued, "a little of your history, for I confess that I have taken a fancy for you and am not content with merely knowing your name."

Harry hesitated a moment, then proceeded to relate who he was and where he dwelt, and we may be sure that when he came to speak of his sister, and how she had promised her hand to a youth who had gone over to the British, his eyes flashed, and he could not help uttering a loud malediction on David Jones.

"Aye, aye, it must cut you to the quick," said Arnold, "and were I you, I would hunt for him till I found him and then—then I would do something which would oblige the lass to wed another man."

These last words rang in Harry M'Crea's ears all the rest of the evening. And the following day he remembered them, and his wrath against David was more furious than ever. Nature chimed in well with his angry thoughts; heavy clouds swept down from the north and shrouded Black Mountain from view, and when another night came round and the little army lay down to rest, they chose the thickest pine grove for their camping-ground, for they knew that a storm was approaching.

Sure enough, when Harry awoke on the morning of May the ninth, it was raining a perfect deluge. But

* A careful study of the history of this expedition clearly establishes Arnold's claim to having originated it.

not for a moment did the tempest delay the march. Through the pathless wilderness they advanced, keeping the locks of their guns protected under their coats ; there was no singing, no laughter ; cold, hungry, weary they tramped along in Indian file—a silent but determined band. Arnold as usual kept beside Harry M'Crea, and the harder it rained—the louder the wind howled, the better seemed to be his spirits.

"Ha!" he exclaimed, "the very devil himself wouldn't be on the look-out for us such weather as this. So blow ye winds! I'll cross the lake to-night in spite of h—!"

"But if Captain Herrick has found no boats at Whitehall to float down to Shoreham, how shall we be able to get over to the west side?" said Harry. "Would you swim?"

"Well, if there's a log stout enough to float me," returned Arnold, "I'll take my next sleep so close to the fort that I'll be able to hear the sentry's tread. Allen and his warriors may follow when they have dried their clothes, and held another town meeting."

"Well, if you go, I go," continued Harry, with a smile; "there'll be room enough for both on the log."

When they reached Shoreham that evening they found, just as the youth had feared, that Captain Herrick was not there to meet them, and the only means of crossing to the other side of the lake were two miserable skiffs.

To make things worse, 'twas growing rapidly dark; through the scud which was flying across the angry waters, the opposite shore was but dimly visible—soon 'twould be quite hidden from view; what was to be done?

"Let Allen call his town meeting," exclaimed Arnold, after gazing a few minutes at the wild scene. "Damn the storm! I'm off for the other side."

With this he sprang into the nearest skiff. But before he had given a single stroke with the oars, the frail bark was filled with volunteers; so was the other one, of which Harry M'Crea took command, then

with a cheer, which could be heard even above the howling blast, away they went.

But it was a dangerous venture, and as Harry exerted all his might to make headway against the wind and waves of lake Champlain, he could not help wondering what a tempest must be like on the ocean.

"I have often thought of becoming a sailor, I am one now," he said. Then while the men were hard at work bailing out the water, which at times rushed into the skiff as if determined to swamp her, he could hear Arnold's voice crying, "Blow, ye winds, blow!"

At length, after the most desperate struggle with the elements that he had ever fought, the youth landed his skiff on the west shore; then while the Green Mountain boys, whom he had ferried over, showered him with praises, he hastened to greet Benedict Arnold, who arrived almost at the same time.

"Aye," said the latter, grasping his hand, "'Twas no child's play; hard work for soul and body. But we've triumphed. Let us rest a few minutes, then we'll go back for another load." *

But with all his energy and spirit, and nobly seconded as he was by Harry M'Crea, he could not have made many more trips across the lake such a night as this, had not the winds lulled towards ten o'clock, and rendered the task somewhat less arduous. At that hour there was a break in the clouds, one star after another peeped out, and the forest which lined the lake ceased to moan.

"You have done nobly," said Ethan Allen, stepping up to Harry, when the latter returned to the eastern shore for the third time. "Yes, you have done nobly; now give me the oars."

Harry obeyed, then while the hardy mountaineer took his turn at the ferry, he gazed about him to find a place where he might warm himself and dry his clothes. But Seth Warner told him that Allen had forbidden any fires to be lit, lest the enemy might discover them and take the alarm. This was

* Dawson's Battles of U. S. by Sea and Land.

not pleasant news for the youth, who was shivering with cold and drenched to the skin. But he consoled himself with watching the bright stars, and with the thought that before many hours the sun would appear and with the sun, perhaps would come a battle.

When Allen returned from his trip across the lake and had filled his boat with another load, he ordered Harry to join him, then in a whisper added "'tis the last batch I'll take over."

On reaching the west shore again the chief called around him all of his band that were there, and addressed them a few words: "we are not all present," he said, "but I believe we are enough to do the work: I'll make the assault with you. Think what the soldiers of Artemus Ward will say when they hear that you have captured Ticonderoga!"

"Good! good!" exclaimed Arnold, unable to restrain his feelings. "'Tis just two o'clock, the heaviest hour of the night; even the wild-cats are asleep; let's make the assault."

About twenty minutes were now spent in drying the guns, making sure that no water had damaged the powder, and imbibing a little rum, which Allen had procured from a farmer named Beman, who lived near Shoreham, and whose son Nathan * had volunteered to act as guide to the fort.

Then having formed his men in three ranks, counted them, and declared that if they numbered eighty-three they were enough, he spoke the following words: "Fellow soldiers, you have for many years past been a scourge and terror to arbitrary powers. Your valor has been famed abroad and acknowledged by everybody. I now propose to surprise and take the garrison now before us; I shall advance at your head and in person conduct you through the wicket gate; for we must this morning either quit our pretensions to valor, or possess ourselves of this fortress in a few minutes; and inasmuch as it is a desperate attempt, which none but the bravest of men dare undertake, I do not urge it

* Died in Franklin county, New York, 1846.

on any one contrary to his will. You that will undertake voluntarily, poise your firelocks."

Every man poised his firelock.

"Good!" said Allen, placing himself in front of the centre file. "Now, forward march." And on they went, treading with the cautious step of Indians, young Beman about thirty paces in advance, and all listening attentively to catch the least sound of alarm.

The fort which they were going to attack was admirably situated for defence. The peninsula on which it stood was elevated more than a hundred feet above the lake which surrounded it on three sides, while on the fourth was a deep swamp: and how well a vigilant enemy might guard such a post had been shown by the fate of Abercrombie, who was repulsed here by the French under Montcalm seventeen years before, with the loss of two thousand men.

At length the guide halted and whispered that they were come to the path which led up the height to the sally-port. At this announcement Ethan Allen bade him fall in the rear, then having given Harry M'Crea's hand a squeeze he sprang up the narrow way. The youth followed close at his heels, and not far behind came Arnold and the rest.

How their hearts throbbed! The stones and earth seemed to break loose under their feet with as much noise as possible; surely they could not reach the top of the plateau without being discovered: and here let us say that Allen was quite ignorant of how large the garrison might be.

In what seemed scarcely half a minute, Jane M'Crea's brother found himself on the crest of the peninsula, where before him dark and formidable rose the walls of the fortress. But he had no time to stop and gaze at it: his chief had broken into a run, and in another moment a voice, which sounded a hundred fold louder for the surrounding stillness, cried out—"Halt! who comes there?"

Then while the grim walls were echoing back the

challenge, the muzzle of a gun was pointed at Allen's breast. Quick followed a flash.

"Missed fire!" shouted the mountaineer, cutting the sentry down with his sword.

Yes, the piece had missed fire and the commander of the expedition had had a narrow escape. But the flash of the powder, although it lasted only a second, had revealed to Harry M'Crea the face of one whom he hated only too bitterly; and David Jones, as he lay bleeding on the ground, knew that it was the brother of his betrothed who was rushing upon him.

"Spare me, Harry!" he cried, seizing the bayonet which was already striking into him, "oh, spare me!"

His words might as well have been spoken to the stones around, and while Arnold and the others were hastening through the sally-port after their leader, the weapon was still driving through his body. Then with an oath Harry M'Crea drew it out and rushed after his comrades.

These were already in the interior of the fort, and so unexpected was the attack, so complete the surprise, that not a shot was fired at them, and the terrified garrison, who were assembling on the parade ground, looked in their night-robes like so many shivering ghosts. But the Americans were so little prepared for such an easy victory that they were too astonished to cheer, and when Harry joined them, the only sound he heard, beside the rattle of side arms, was Ethan Allen banging on the Commandant's door and shouting to him to open it.

Presently Captain Delaplace peeped out and demanded the name of him who thus dared disturb his repose—for it was not yet four o'clock and too early for reveille.

"I'm Ethan Allen," was the response, "and I order you instantly to surrender."

"By what authority do you demand it?" inquired Delaplace, rubbing his eyes and wondering if he could have suddenly gone mad.

"In the name of the great Jehovah and the Continental Congress!"

“Ah! oh! indeed!”—Then rubbing his eyes a little more, and taking as good a survey of the parade ground as the dim light would permit, the British commander wrapped his dressing-gown closer about him, and withdrew into his chamber, leaving Arnold to complete his victory in any way he might see fit.

But no sooner did the Green Mountain boys hear their leader's exultant shout, than all discipline came to an end: they set up a cry louder and wilder than his, then proceeded to give vent to their feelings in a way which disgusted Benedict Arnold, who ventured, at no small risk, to remonstrate with them.

But his words were scoffed at; whatever might be regarded as private property was at once destroyed; the volunteers would not even help make an inventory of the war material which had been captured, and Allen was obliged to make it himself, assisted by Arnold and Harry M'Crea.

And let us add that the spoils were found to consist of one hundred and eighty-two cannon, one thirteen-inch mortar, three cart-loads of flints, ten tons of musket balls, besides thirty barrels of flour, and a quantity of other provisions.

At length, Allen was cheered by the arrival of Seth Warner, who came with the rest of the band, and who, we need not say, was chagrined at not having been allowed to take part in the capture of the fort. His services, however, were most useful in restoring order and discipline among Allen's immediate followers, not a few of whom he had to knock down and almost choke before he could make them obey.

Then, when he had got them to form ranks, he told them that he was going to lead them against a fort which was as important as Ticonderoga: “Come with me,” he said, “to Crown Point, and when you have captured it I'll ask Allen to give you a holiday for a month.” This free and easy speech made them forget his rough treatment of them, and with a shout they demanded to be led at once to another victory.

“What soldiers!” said Arnold to Harry M'Crea.

"By heaven? If it's ever my luck to command such a horde, I'll bit them!"

"Well, 'twas a great victory, say what you will about the men," spoke Allen, who had overheard this remark. "And 'twas almost bloodless—only one fellow scratched by my sword."

"Killed, you mean," put in Seth Warner. "But for that I'd have stopped the boat and made it come back lest the redcoat I saw in it might have been a fugitive trying to escape—but he was dead."

"What boat?" inquired Allen, turning to his lieutenant.

"Why the canoe that was shooting up the lake as I crossed over. The Indian who was paddling it told me that the fort was already ours, and that he was carrying the body of the only British soldier killed, to Canada for burial. It seems that the redcoat's home was in Canada, and as I felt quite sure from the view I took of his face, that he was really dead, why I made no objection to let the canoe pass on."

"Humph! I didn't think the blow I gave was enough to kill him," said Allen. "However, he deserved what he got, for if his piece hadn't missed fire, he'd have sent me into the next world."

Here they were interrupted by Arnold, who handed each an inventory of the material which had been captured, and after Ethan Allen had cast his eye over it, he drew Harry aside and said: "young man, you deserve something more than my thanks for your conduct to-day. You entered the fort close at my heels, and unlike the rest, you did not take to pillaging. Here, carry this list of the spoils to the Connecticut Assembly, and while they will sing Hosanna for the fall of Ticonderoga, they will likewise reward my messenger. So, hasten south with all the speed you can; good news can't travel too fast."

Harry, in spite of these flattering words, would rather have remained and taken part in the attack on Crown Point. But his leader's tone was peremptory; so, after thanking him for his kindness, and having

said good-by to Benedict Arnold, he descended to the lake, where jumping into a boat he was soon on the eastern shore. There he tarried only long enough to refresh himself a little at farmer Beman's, then mounting a horse which the old man lent him, he set off on his journey to Connecticut.

CHAPTER VI.

MORNING is the Golden Age of day; our spirits are always high in the morning. They rise with the glorious sun; and now as Harry M'Crea rode along, although alone in the wilderness, he did not feel lonely.

The delicious breeze from the west, the dogwood trees bursting into bloom, and scenting the air with their fragrance, the waters of the lake rippling in the sunshine and reflecting the azure sky—all contributed to his exultant spirits. He could not but think that Ethan Allen was a very kind man, to send him off to the settlements the bearer of such joyful news—news which would gladden the hearts of Hancock and Adams and Warren, and set the whole country in a glow.

"And I'll rejoin him," he said, "before the month is out; oh, a soldier's life is a glorious one."

At length, unable to restrain his feelings, he began to sing, and the forest, which had never been thus awakened from its slumber, sent back a wild echo which at first Harry did not notice. But by and by he halted and gave a call; then the echo answered and in its tone seemed to be something weird and sad. Again he called, again it came, and as he heard it a troubled look passed over his face. Nor did he sing any more, but urged on his steed with a muttered oath, and when a little further on the maples and dogwood trees changed to pines and hemlocks, and the bright lake disappeared from view and the gloom of the deep forest settled around him, he glanced uneasily over his shoulder and thought that it was a very long journey to take all by himself.

"If I only had a dog to keep me company," he said.

Then he patted his horse's mane, and spoke to the creature, and wished that it would neigh and show a little life. But on the old nag went, at a jog trot, with ears drooping and looking the picture of melancholy.

At length when his watch told him that it was noon he halted. The forest just here was not quite so dense, and near by the tree to which he tied his horse ran a foaming trout stream which reminded him of Wild-cat Run; and as he watched its rapid current glittering in the sunbeams, which forced their way down through the pines, his bright expression returned and he wondered at the strange feeling that had come over him a little while before.

"Heavens!" he exclaimed, "If I could ride the whole distance in the sunshine; if this sweet brook would accompany me all the way." Then muttering, "what a fool I was to be afraid of myself!" he threw himself down on a bed of moss and began to eat the frugal meal which he had brought with him. But presently his eye rested on his bayonet and at once the sensation of horror came upon him with redoubled force, and seizing the blood-stained weapon, he drove it as far as he could into the earth.

"Curse it," he cried, "curse it! I saw blood enough on the nineteenth of April; but this blood speaks to me—it touches me—curse my bayonet!" Just then a shadow passed swiftly across the sunny spot where he was lying, accompanied by a shrill piercing cry. It was only an eagle; he had often heard the sound before, why did it startle him now? And as he rose to his feet even the voice of the brook seemed to change and murmur sad reproachful words.

But Harry M' Crea was not a person to give way to superstitious fear; he did not believe in ghosts, and after struggling a moment with himself he gave a loud, defiant laugh, then drawing his bayonet out of the ground, sprang on his horse and rode off.

Thanks to a powerful will, he was able to smother for awhile all thought of the deed which he had com-

mitted that morning, and during the next few hours his mind was occupied thinking of Ethan Allen and Benedict Arnold and of the daring expedition which they had undertaken. Then he indulged in pleasant visions of the career which opened before him, of the high honors he might win, and of the good that he might do to his country—for with all his faults Harry M'Crea had a patriotic heart. And as he thought of his native land his mind went back to the French and Indian war, and from that to the war with King Philip, which he had often heard Josiah Woodbury tell about, then back further still to the early colonists, their trials and sufferings and fierce battles with the Pequots, and from the bottom of his heart he wished that he had lived in those days and known Miles Standish.

While he thus indulged in pleasant reverie, the time flew quickly by, and when at length evening came round he was quite himself again. "Hurrah!" he shouted, when suddenly the wall of pines and hemlocks broke away on his right and showed him the western horizon all glowing with the rays of the setting sun. "Hurrah! Hurrah!" But more beautiful even than the horizon was the log cabin close by with a tiny wreath of smoke curling from the chimney, and a dog barking at the door.

"Charming, charming!" he exclaimed, "I could pass all my life here. 'Tis the sweetest spot I've ever seen."

In another moment he was out of the saddle and knocking for admittance to this humble abode on which he had come so unexpectedly. But although he knocked twice nobody appeared; then concluding that its occupant was not at home, he raised the latch and walked in.

The room in which he found himself was, sure enough, quite deserted, yet the corn cake baking on the hearth showed that the hunter who dwelt here, could not be far off.

"Perhaps," thought Harry, glancing towards a narrow passage-way with a moose-skin drawn across it and

which had escaped his notice when he first entered, "perhaps he is asleep in that inner chamber."

With this he went out and tethered his nag, then having returned proceeded to explore this other part of the house. But he could find nobody.

"Well, whoever is master here," thought the youth, "he won't refuse me hospitality; so I'll just make myself at home." Accordingly, he placed his rifle in a corner, then taking a seat on a bench before the fireplace began to watch the dying embers.

And there he remained for almost an hour, less and less light came in through the window, the dog every now and then gave a bark, yet nobody appeared.

At length, having made up his mind that the corn-cake would spoil if left where it was, he drew it from the ashes and breaking off a piece began to eat. But he found it so good that one slice did not satisfy him, and when he got through, the portion left for the hunter was very small indeed. He then retired to the other chamber, where he had noticed a heap of deer-skins lying on the floor, and throwing himself upon them, tried to fall asleep. But for some reason or other, sleep would not come. In vain did he close his eyes and try to stop thinking; the silent room seemed to have a voice and in the darkness visions arose.

"There it comes again," he said, suddenly raising himself on his elbow and gazing at the corner where his gun stood. "And there is blood on the bayonet still. I thought I had rubbed it off; curse the sight!"

But instead of having recourse to prayer, instead of asking God's forgiveness for what he had done, he ground his teeth, then burying his face in the deer-robcs, muttered oath upon oath.

But the bayonet, with the red drops upon it, followed him and seemed even more vivid with his eyes closed than before.

He cursed himself and he cursed his friend Knox. "Oh, Aaron," he said, "why did you not tell me that David was at Ticonderoga? You knew it, but would not tell me. I hated him bitterly, but I would not

have gone there deliberately to kill him. But 'tis too late; oh, Aaron, shame on you!"

This last excuse, however, for his deed, afforded little consolation; he could not hush the whispers of his conscience: He remembered how his sister had implored him not to pursue her betrothed; he remembered the harsh response he had given her, as well as his rudeness to Knox, when the latter had ventured to plead for David Jones.

At length, with a horrid imprecation he sprang to his feet, rushed to the corner where his rifle was, then unfastening the bayonet, hastened with it to the door, where he threw it as far as he could into the woods.

"It shall never stare at me again," he said, as he went back to the inner room, "and now I'll try hard to sleep."

But he had not more than closed his eyes, when he was roused by the neighing of a horse; in another moment he heard voices, and in his joy he sprang up from his couch, and began to sing a merry song.

While he was singing the door of the cabin opened, then a light glimmered, and footsteps approached.

Without stopping his song, Harry M'Crea advanced to greet the master of the house, with hand stretched out, all ready to give him a hearty shake. He had scarcely, however, taken three steps when he halted, then fell back with a cry of terror, while the face, which had peeped in upon him for an instant, disappeared again behind the moose-skin.

But he was not left long to himself, in another moment a man carrying a gun on his shoulder entered with a heavy tramp, then thrusting a lantern in his face, took a stern view of him.

"Whoever you are," exclaimed the hunter, "you're guilty of something. Yes, you've been on some bad work or other, or you'd not look so white. Come, who are you?"

In as calm a tone as he could assume, Harry now declared that he had only come to seek shelter for the night and that he was the bearer of a message from

Ethan Allen to the Connecticut Assembly, announcing the capture of Ticonderoga.

This news produced an immediate effect on the other, who knew the leader of the Green Mountain boys well, and would have joined his expedition had he heard of it in time ; so shaking Harry's hand, he bade him make himself at home. "But never," he added, "be caught asleep again in a stranger's house. 'Tisn't a safe thing to do, and no wonder you were startled when we all arrived in a bunch, for we might have been savages going to scalp you—ha, ha, ha!"

With this he conducted him into the other room, Harry still very pale and his heart throbbing more violently than it ever had before.

Standing by the hearth were three persons, two of them Indians, a man and a woman, the other a white girl of about the same age as Harry's sister, but of a more slender form. Nor were her cheeks plump and rosy like Jane's, but lily white, while her dark eyes over-arched by the most beautifully pencilled brows, had a diamond flash in them which was fairly bewitching. Her hand, too, was not the strong, industrious hand of Jane M'Crea, accustomed to sew and bake and churn, nor was it ever so slightly tinged by the sun, but like her cheeks it was of a spotless hue, and the bracelet on her wrist looked like gold dropped in the snow.

But the most striking thing about the girl was her hair, which was cut quite short and brushed in the fashion of a boy's, and as if to make her resemblance to David Jones more perfect, it curled exactly as his did.

But Harry M'Crea paid no heed to her winning looks ; his eyes were riveted on a silver medal pinned to her breast, and he dared not lift them any higher.

"How mysterious are God's ways!" he said to himself. "I threw away my bayonet on purpose to try and forget David, but here is his living image come to haunt me!"

"Well, I must say, for a good looking lad you act very oddly," spoke the hunter, after watching him a

moment. "Here is a young lady on her travels, her course lies in the same direction as yours; come now, make friends and let's hear your voices; 'tis the first time this lonely cabin has had a couple like yourselves in it."

At these words Harry gave him an impatient glance, then his eyes fell to the floor, while the young woman blushed, for to tell the truth she had not been able to resist the temptation of looking at Jane's brother, especially when he had not been looking at her.

Seeing that Harry was not in a talkative mood, the hunter shrugged his shoulders, then went on to inform the girl that Ethan Allen had captured Ticonderoga, and ended by telling her that the bashful boy at her side was one of the gallant warriors who had taken part in the victory, and that he was now on his way to the settlements with the news.

"And it's wonderful," he added, "how tongue-tied my friend is after performing such an exploit; one should think he would be all smiles." Then again addressing Harry M'Crea, he begged him not to play the fool.

"When you and this lass depart from here," he said, "I may never see the like of you again; so do speak and laugh, and—and make love to her if you like. Confound your moping."

For about a minute there was profound silence; it was evident from Harry's countenance, that he was much agitated, while the flush on the girl's cheek grew deeper; then drawing a long breath and to the hunter's great delight, she opened the conversation.

"Pray let me ask, were you ever in Massachusetts?" was a question which caused the youth's heart to throb as violently as when she had first peeped in upon him while he was singing.

"Yes," he answered, glancing at her face a moment. Then in a trembling tone, "but why do you ask me that?"

"I'll tell you presently; here let us sit down on this bench, and while Nanny prepares the supper, you

can listen to me at your ease. But I hope you are not offended by my question."

"Offended? Bah! why should he be?" put in the hunter. "He is only troubled 'cause your face is new to him; he'll get over his bashful fit soon."

While the girl had been talking, the Indian woman had stared at her in astonishment; and it was enough to make the faithful creature open her eyes, to see one so innocent and unaccustomed to men's society as her young mistress, boldly address a youth whom she had never met before, and who, moreover, was a rebel.

Nor was Nanny's surprise unmixed with a tinge of anxiety; for Harry M'Crea was a very handsome fellow, and his very reticence and apparent modesty seemed well calculated to lead the artless maiden on.

"Well, tell me, sir," continued the latter, when he had taken a seat beside her, "did you ever meet any one in Massachusetts named David Jones?"

At this inquiry, Harry shuddered, then in a hurried, more nervous tone than before, replied, "yes; but why do you ask me?"

"Oh, you knew him then!" cried the girl, seizing his hand and not noticing in her great joy the painful expression of his face. "You knew him. Oh, thank God!"

"Yes," repeated the youth, and this time there was something fierce in his voice; then snatching his hand away he glanced toward the door, and we believe that if the hunter had not been leaning against it, he would have rushed out of the cabin.

This strange behavior, however, did not disconcert his fair questioner; the great object of her heart seemed likely to be accomplished, her tiresome journey through the wilderness was going to be rewarded; and even though the young man might be one of those who had wickedly taken up arms against the king, she felt at this moment as if she could embrace him.

"David Jones," she went on, with tears glistening in her bright eyes, "is my twin brother, and oh, if you can tell me where to find him, you will be doing me a

service greater than I ever can reward you for; I am alone in the world unless I find David; tell me where he is?"

"Why do you trouble me so?" exclaimed Harry M'Crea, looking wildly at her. Then pressing his hand to his brow, and scarcely knowing what he said,

"He is in Boston," he muttered, "go seek him there. And yet no, you mightn't find him; he may be gone."

"Well, you can conduct me as far as the British lines, can you not? And if he isn't in Boston, I can get some of our officers to write to Halifax and New York, and inquire what has become of him; I vow that if he is in the land of the living, he shall hear from me."

"Then your brother is a redcoat?" interrupted the hunter, taking his pipe out of his mouth, and staring at the young woman. "You didn't tell me this afore; doubtless I'm giving shelter to an enemy."

At these words Helen Jones rose from the bench, and with a proud look informed him that rather than accept his unwilling hospitality, she would pass the night in the forest.

"No, by heaven, you shan't," exclaimed Harry M'Crea, springing up; "he'll sleep out of doors, not you."

"Ha! ha! ha! the ice is broken at last," continued their host, laughing heartily at Harry's earnestness.

Then putting his pipe aside and laying his hands on the girl's shoulders, "Do you think," he said, "that I'd turn the like of you out of my house? No, not if you were ten times the Britisher you are. I'm a bear, and say rough things, but you've tamed me, and if I dared I'd—I'd kiss you."

There was something so frank in this speech, that Helen could take no offence, but only blushed and resumed her seat.

Harry presently followed her example, and she was in hopes that after having so gallantly taken her part,

he would be willing to enter into friendly conversation. But to her regret he buried his face in his hands, and she fancied that she heard him sigh.

"What is the matter with you?" she said, after watching him a moment. Then gently pulling his arm, "do tell me what is the matter, perhaps I can console you." But when he uncovered his face, and looked at her, she drew back.

"Why you startle me," she exclaimed, "one might think that you had seen a ghost, you are trembling; surely I do not frighten you?"

"No, no, I am weary, I want rest; let me go lie down in the corner and try to sleep; perhaps to-morrow I'll feel better," and in his voice was something so sad and pleading that the hunter concluded he was ill, and whispered as much to Nanny.

"Well yes, go, I see that you need repose," continued Helen playfully; "the victory at Ticonderoga has over-excited you. But 'tis well that you know my darling brother, or I'd keep you up half the night, in spite of your headache, and scold you for being a rebel, and stealing one of the king's forts. But we'll get it back from you, oh we will!"

Here she laughed so merrily that her host, true American as he was, could not help giving an approving nod, and saying, "yes, yes, you'll get it back."

But the Indian woman shook her head and thought it boded ill for the future, to see a maiden so carefully brought up as Helen Jones, making so free with a stranger.

"And sleep well," continued the girl, as Harry M'Crea wrapped a deerskin around him, and threw himself on the floor. "Do your best not to wake up till dawn, for to-morrow I mean to worry you with a thousand questions; so good-night, and don't dream of ghosts."

But when the last ember on the hearth had died out, and when the happy girl herself was slumbering beside the Indian woman in the other room, dreaming of her long lost-brother, Harry was still awake.

His temples were throbbing, and he was muttering maledictions on himself, nor did he spare his friend Knox.

"If you had only told me," he said, "that David was at Ticonderoga, I might not have gone there; oh, Aaron, why did you let me go?" Then with a groan, "But alas! I might have guessed it from your looks. Oh, headstrong fool that I was! I have done in a rash moment, what a whole lifetime cannot undo."

More than once during the silent hours he was tempted to escape from the cabin, but the hunter was lying so close to the door, that he could not well have opened it without awakening him. But if there were moments when he longed to find himself free in the forest, occasionally another thought came upon him with wonderful power, and it was a soothing thought. Yet how was he to give it practical shape?

"She is alone in the world without David," he would sigh, "I have taken him from her, what can I do to make up for the loss? Toil for her? Be her slave? Follow her wherever she may go, and find my just punishment in gazing on her face—hearing her voice? Oh, yes, yes, that I can do."

But then he remembered that she was on the side of the king, and opposed to his native land. How could he follow her? How support her? Then he would sigh again, and wish that he had a fortune to throw in her lap, or that some fiend might attack her, and that in saving her life, he might receive a mortal wound, and die at her feet.

And so all the long night he tossed from side to side; the dog howled, the hunter snored, the cold air crept down the chimney, but no sleep came to refresh him. The words, "don't dream of ghosts," rang in his ears, and when at length the grey light of dawn stole in through the little window, there were tears in Harry's eyes, and if ever tears of repentance were shed, it was by him. For the first time in many a year he had recourse to prayer. "I deserve to suffer," he said, "Jane often told me to keep holy the Sabbath, and to

restrain my violent temper, and not to curse. But I would not listen to her, and so wickedness grew upon me. Oh, Lord, punish me well, for I deserve it. But forgive the cruel deed which I committed. Oh, do not all my life let me see blood on my hands!" And Harry was still on his knees praying when the hunter awoke.

CHAPTER VII.

THE sun next morning was an hour high, when Harry M'Crea mounted his horse and continued his way to the settlements, followed by the Indian woman and Helen Jones. He was going to act as their guide instead of the Iroquois warrior, who had refused to proceed further, declaring that his services were not needed since the pale face knew the trail as well as himself. The hunter, who had given them the best welcome his poor cabin could afford, appeared really sorry to part with them, and for almost a minute while they were moving away from his door, held the girl's hand in his, and as he pressed it, bade Harry make a good American of her, then when she tossed her head and cried, "God save the king!" he roared with laughter, and told him to put her in the guard-house.

And so off they went, and for a mile or two Helen kept behind the youth, pondering what her servant-maid had said, and trying to discover what harm might result from a friendly conversation with him.

"He knows David," she said, "and that already is a tie between us. True, he acted very strangely, even rudely, last evening, and frightened me by his wild looks. But, poor fellow, he had a dreadful headache. This morning he seems less reserved and in better humor. Oh, really, Nanny is too prudish; she'd not let me speak to anybody if she could help it."

But Harry M'Crea gave the bewitching creature, who was thinking about him, little encouragement to

open the conversation; nevertheless, it would be untrue to say that she was not the object of his thoughts. But if her sparkling eyes had found a way to his heart—and Harry's heart was very susceptible—it had only made his remorse keener and harder to bear.

"I prayed the Lord," he said, "to forgive my bloody deed; I should have prayed him, too, to free me from this maiden's presence. The more I feel that I could love her, the more bitterly do I hate myself. Poor thing! she little dreams what a guilty wretch I am! Oh, if my death could bring David to life, how quickly I would die! Oh, if I were not a coward I would throw myself at her feet, confess what I have done and beg for mercy."

"You are an early riser, sir," spoke Helen Jones, at length, overcoming her scruples and boldly riding up to him. "I hope you have quite recovered from the fatigue and excitement of yesterday?"

"No, no, I am weary as ever," replied Harry, sighing, and at the same time blushing a little. Then after muttering a few words to himself, "but how do you know that I rise early?"

At this question his companion blushed, then evidently with some unwillingness, answered, "because I saw you kneeling at your prayers while the Indian and the hunter were fast asleep. I don't know what made me awaken at that hour, perhaps 'twas my impatience to reach Boston, and let me add that I was very glad to find you beginning the day in such a religious manner.

"I scarcely dare hope that you are a member of the true Anglican Church; doubtless you belong to one of the many sects which Puritanism has thrown out; nevertheless, there must be good in you to be so early at your devotions."

The blushing, smiling, arch way in which these words were spoken made Harry doubt whether she was poking fun at him or not, and when he turned and gazed upon her, her bright eyes at once dropped to the ground.

"Poor thing!" he sighed, "If she only knew the

truth ! If she knew what I have done, what a change would come over her happy heart ! ”

But the happy girl did not know it ; the thought that she might soon meet her twin brother filled her with joy to overflowing, and even as he was gazing upon her she looked up and burst into such a merry laugh that the Indian woman was more distressed than ever.

“ I can’t help it, sir,” she said, apologizing for her mirth, “ I really can’t ; I feel like a bird escaped from its cage ; how beautiful the world is to-day ! ”

The country through which they were passing was indeed very beautiful. The solemn pines and hemlocks no longer threw a shadow over the trail. They had not entirely disappeared, but stood further apart as if on purpose to let in the bright sunshine, while the eye frequently rested on groups of dog-wood trees in full bloom, and wild apple-trees and maples, and here and there a dead cedar, with a grapevine twined round its naked limbs, giving to the old tree a fantastic beauty, which it had never possessed in its living days ; blossoms filled the air with an odor more delicious than ever came from garden or green-house ; bees were darting to and fro ; squirrels ran out of their holes and chattered as the party went by, and one saucy fellow dropped his nut right on top of Helen’s head ; from every side came the drumming of partridges and the bugle notes of the jay-birds, while occasionally a deer would cross the path and after stopping just long enough to show wonder at the intruders, would toss its graceful head and vanish.

“ Oh yes, it is glorious ! ” exclaimed Helen Jones, “ with David I could pass all my life in such a country as this. Perhaps when the war is over and we have brought you rebels back to your allegiance, I’ll get him to build me a log cabin here, and he and I will play hunter together ; ha, ha, ha ! ”

But her voice, so sweet and full of music, instead of making Harry laugh, went to his heart like the stab of a poignard, and he was tempted for a moment to ride off into the forest and never see her again.

"Methinks, sir," she continued, after riding a short distance further in silence, "methinks the Puritan worship inclineth one to melancholy, doth it not? Otherwise you would not be so wrapped up in yourself. Better become a member of the Anglican church, and then you'll be less gloomy."

As she spoke she playfully stroked his arm with a birch switch, which the hunter had given her, and eyed him in such an earnest way that had Nanny been looking on she might well have concluded that the child was losing her heart.

"Oh, how can you be so downcast with the sun shining on you? and after making me so happy?" she exclaimed, again tapping him with the switch, and this time really seeming to be offended. "Do you know that I dreamt of David last night. I did indeed, and—"

"Hush! hush!" said Harry, "Leave me alone! why trouble me as you do?" Then pressing his hand to his brow and in a softer tone—"But no, no," he murmured, "go on; tell me what you like; I will listen."

But Helen had already left his side and ridden back to see what Nanny wanted, for the latter had called her, and he was beginning to hope that she would remain with her maid, when she suddenly rode up again and exclaimed, "Ha! you wouldn't listen to my dream, well I'll torment you with this—look!"

Harry looked, then before he could recover from his surprise and horror, she was trying to fasten a bayonet on his gun.

"No, drop it! throw it away! I will not have it!" he cried, grasping the weapon and endeavoring to wrest it from her.

But Helen was stubborn and would not release her hold. "No indeed," she said, "I'll not throw it away; Nanny found it a short distance from the cabin and she gave it to me and now I give it to you. You have no bayonet and ought to have one."

Then lowering her voice and fixing her bright eyes

full upon him, "Now don't get angry," she continued, "but put it on your gun to please me."

"Tormentor!" murmured Harry M'Crea, as he let go the weapon. "But I deserve it. Justly punished! justly punished!"

Pleased with her victory, and little dreaming why he behaved so strangely, Helen laughed and clapped her hands, then drew a paper from her pocket and holding it up before him, "Look," she exclaimed, "this is my handwriting; tell me, is brother's like it?"

It was indeed remarkably like the handwriting of David Jones, and Harry shuddered as he replied, "yes, it is."

"Oh, good! good! I'm so glad!" and as she spoke, tears of joy came to her eyes. "I want to resemble him in everything. That is why I wear short hair; I could if I chose have beautiful, long, streaming curls. And I keep it brushed just as I know his must be."

Then after a pause, during which she felt tempted to give her companion another cut with the switch, she went on to reveal something of her history.

"If I can't hear your voice," she said, "I am determined that you shall hear mine. So now, if you'll listen, I'll tell you who I am, and that will be the same as telling who David is, for perhaps he kept it a secret."

Here she hesitated a moment, for Harry was striking his forehead and groaning, and she thought it might perhaps be better, after all, to let him alone and not trouble him with her idle talk. But her spirits were too high to be repressed, her happy heart was bursting with joy, the faintest suspicion of the dark, hideous truth had not yet dawned upon her, so, despite the youth's odd and unfriendly behavior, she presently began her narrative, not in any regular way, however, but taking it up here and there as suited her fancy.

"I was born," she said, "in Quebec. And oh, what a beautiful city it is! and the people so warm-hearted and genial! I fear there is no place like it in New England; you Puritans fast and pray too much

to be anything else but melancholy. And my home was a very happy one as long as dear father lived. But when he died mother married again, and our step-father was so cruel that David rebelled against him, and ran away. Poor David! his last words to me were, 'I am going to live in Massachusetts, keep it a secret, and by and by when I'm a man I'll come back to you?' Then he kissed me and we both cried, and I remember I held him in my arms and didn't want to let him go. But I couldn't hold him, and he went away, and I haven't seen him since. Well, now dear mother is dead, and as my step-father never liked me any better than he liked David, I too have left my home and, as I have told you, am on my way to join my brother. Oh, thank God for the tidings you have given me of him!" Then in a slightly sad tone, "But no doubt he is very much changed. And yet I am sure he has still the same merry disposition. Oh no, you'll never make a Puritan out of David! But is he married?"

Harry M'Crea did not speak, but shook his head.

"Well, is he in love?"

"Oh God! How many times must I ask you to leave me alone?" cried the youth, his eyes flashing at her in such a wild, angry way, that she was really frightened, and was about to turn her steed around and ride beside the Indian woman, when, seizing her bridle, "No, stay," he said, "stay. From the bottom of my heart, I ask pardon for my rudeness; go on, tell me what you like, I will listen." Then in a voice too low for her to hear, "I deserve it all," he murmured, "justly punished! justly punished!" At the same time tears came to his eyes, for there were tears in Helen's.

"You hate me, no doubt, because I am true to my king," she sighed. "But remember I am a poor orphan, alone in the world unless I find David, so you ought not to wonder at the many questions I ask about him, for when you leave me, I will have to depend on the information which I may now get from you, to keep on his track."

Then clasping her hands and lifting her eyes to the blue sky : " Oh brother, brother, I will love any woman that you may love ; but remain true to your king ! This medal on my breast was father's medal, and I mean you shall wear it, and tread in his footsteps. I am a woman and cannot fight, but night and day I will work for your promotion, my whole soul is wrapped up in you."

Her attitude and expression powerfully affected Harry M'Crea, and as he watched her, there arose in his breast a fierce struggle between love and remorse.

The feeling which drew him towards her, was almost irresistible. Yet how could he even so much as touch her hand—he the murderer of her brother?

But Helen did not leave him long to these burning thoughts, and playfully drawing her switch across his arm, asked him his name.

" 'Tis only fair to tell me," she added, " for I have told you mine."

" Brown," answered Harry after a slight hesitation.

" Oh good ! I feared it might be some melancholy name like Job : ha, ha, ha ! Massachusetts, I believe, is full of Jobs and Jeremiahs. But your name is Brown : good ! I'll not forget it." Then she went on again to tell about Quebec and the people who lived there, and so pleasing was her description of her native place, that when she had finished, Harry begged her not to stop.

" I could listen to you all day," he said, " your voice is sunshine to me."

At this she laughed and blushed, while for the first time since they had met, Harry threw off his gloom and laughed too.

" Well, since you are a good boy and willing to be friends with me at last, I will go on," returned Helen. And so she prattled away for more than an hour longer and every glance of her eye, every breath she took wrapped the golden coil of love closer and closer around

his heart, and he made a silent vow that if he did not himself marry Helen Jones no other man should.

The rest of the journey to the settlements passed much more pleasantly than the beginning. Harry M'Crea was charmed by his fair companion as never youth had been before, while the charmer prattled on at such a rate that Nanny gave up all attempt at reproof—it was a clear case of love madness. “Young squaws are all alike,” murmured the Indian woman, “and this pale face warrior isn't bad looking.”

Ever and anon, however, Harry M'Crea's dark mood would return, and the thought of his sister troubled him more than it had done at first. He determined never to see her again.

“As soon as Helen Jones leaves me,” he said to himself, “I'll go South: There will be fighting in other parts of the country besides Massachusetts. But I cannot go back to Ticonderoga; 'twould bring before me too vividly the memory of my crime. Nor can I look again on Jenny's face. Poor, poor Jenny.”

But what might become of Helen Jones after he would part with her? Aye, this thought troubled him too, and troubled him very much, for the nearer the time came when they must part, the more precious did she seem in his eyes.

At length the youth found himself at the end of his wearisome journey. The village of Lexington had been skilfully avoided, and by keeping along unfrequented lanes and bridle paths he had brought Helen and the Indian woman to the American camp at Cambridge.

It was night; there was no moon, and the darkness was increased by a fog which had floated in from the sea. But to make his task easier, the soldiers of General Ward's army were not yet accustomed to guard-duty and he found little difficulty in passing the girl and her maid across the neck of land between Boston and Roxbury, which was watched by only two pickets, neither of them very wide awake.

Before they separated, however, Harry and Helen

clasped hands, and the latter, who bitterly regretted the absence of the moon, declared to him in a voice, which told more than words, that she was sorry the journey was over.

"And should we take you prisoner"—but Nanny would not let her finish the sentence.

"Come, come, Miss Helen," said the faithful old nurse, "you mustn't stand here talking; we're 'tween the lines and both sides may fire on us, so come along."

With this she took her by the arm and led her toward the British sentry, whose heavy tread could be distinctly heard through the damp night air.

CHAPTER VIII.

IT was well for Jane M'Crea, after her brother went off with Ethan Allen's band, that she found a great deal to occupy her time, otherwise brooding over what might happen to her betrothed would have given her scarcely one quiet moment.

Yet busy as she was, attending to household duties and visiting the homes of the wounded minute-men, she was not always able to preserve a calm, serene face, and every time she entered her chamber, and looked on David's picture hanging against the wall, her eyes would fill with tears.

Already half of May had gone by; she ought soon to hear from Allen's expedition, and Knox and Billy Smith had promised to keep their ears wide open, and let her know the moment any news arrived.

One evening, while she sat in her bedroom finishing the flag for Colonel Brewer's regiment, in which Aaron commanded the color company, there came a knock at the door and presently Mrs. M'Neil's lover entered, his face wreathed in smiles, and poor Jane felt sure that he had something good to communicate about David Jones.

But Billy soon undeceived her by beginning a se-

ries of hops around the room and exclaiming—"She's proud of me! ha, ha, she's proud of me!"

"Mr. Smith, pray be calm and explain yourself," said the girl, "oh, how I wish I could feel as you do!"

"Well you soon will," he exclaimed, suddenly stopping his capers and taking a chair in front of her. Then while he snuffed the candle he went on to declare his firm belief that she would hear from Ticonderoga in less than three days. "You know," he said, "it's a wild country 'tween here and there, and a messenger couldn't travel very fast through the woods. But this is the fifteenth of May, so depend on it good news can't be far off; and what is more, Harry is a lucky fellow, and I bet ten to one he hasn't got a scratch, so don't worry any more about him. Rather pity me for having stayed at home. Yes, I ought to have gone with him; it must have been glorious! I can hear the cannon and the musketry, and I can see the redcoats running. Oh dear, why didn't I go to Ticonderoga?"

This was too much for even Jane's sad heart, and she had to smile. It was so like Billy Smith. He knew that she knew he was a coward, yet here he was cracking jokes over it with a face as sober as a judge. Yes, she had to smile.

Presently he commenced to grin again, then seizing the flag with a half sheepish look, he spread it out on her lap and began to admire it.

"I'm going to be color-bearer," he said, "for Captain Knox commands the color company to which I belong, and he insists that I shall have the post of honor in it. And Mrs. M'Neil told me not five minutes ago that she was proud of me; and her sweet voice always acts on me like hot punch; it makes me feel—well really I can't explain how it makes me feel. But it starts me a capering and I can't always stop right away." Then with a sly glance at Jane, "one of these days perhaps," he continued, "when she has changed her name, I'll get used to her voice, and it won't act on me in this way every time she opens her mouth."

Then holding up the flag, "And this is the thing

I'm to carry, eh? Well 'darned' if it isn't ten times prettier than that piece of bunting with an old pine tree on it, which the minute-men think so much of; yes, this is beautiful!"

The flag which so charmed our friend, and to which Jane M'Crea had devoted all her skill, consisted of a blue ground, quartered in one corner with the red cross of St. George, a pine tree in the upper section of the cross.*

"I am glad that my work gives so much satisfaction," returned Jane, "and when you have your soldier hat on and the breeze is spreading out the folds of the flag, many besides Mrs. M'Neil will be proud of you."

"Well, pray, what is to be our uniform, Miss Jenny? Colonel Brewer thinks you're a genius and I hear that he has left it all to you?"

"So he has, and as the Provincial Congress has prescribed no particular garb for the volunteers, I have concluded to let you fight in your every-day clothes. But on every hat is to be a black cockade and an eagle feather, and you see I have sewed your cockade on, in such a way as not to hide the bullet hole."

This was spoken with a faint smile, while Billy scratched his head and made believe that he was examining a spot on the ceiling. Then glancing at a pile of hats which lay in the corner, "bless me;" he said, "what trouble it must have been putting cockades on all of them; that's what you get for being thought so much of. If you wan't a genius Colonel Brewer would have set others to help you."

"I like plenty to do," returned Jane, leaning wearily back in her chair, while a sad expression, which the other observed, stole over her countenance.

"Now there you are beginning again to think about Harry," he exclaimed—for Billy did not know that she was betrothed to David Jones, and naturally concluded it was for her brother she felt so anxious—"you're looking just as you did when I came in the room. Oh cheer up, do!"

* The New England flag : Lossing, 1. p. 541.

Then after a second time snuffing the candle, "but, Miss Jenny," he continued, "what has become of David Jones? Haven't laid eyes on him since the day afore the fight; has anything happened to him? I've heard lots of things said, but nothing that I can rely upon."

To this the girl made no response, but took up her needle, and while she threaded it tried hard not to let him hear her sigh.

"Well, I guess he's made tracks for the enemy," pursued Billy. "I once heard him talk as if he'd side with 'em if there was war; and he and Harry had high words about it and your brother struck him; but David just folded his arms and took the blow as if 'twas only play, which surprised me, for I know he is plucky. Why, I saw Dave knock a fellow down twice his weight at the fair last year."

Poor Jane! How must she have felt when Billy made the above revelation! "No doubt," she sighed, "when Harry struck him, David was thinking of me; he remembered that Harry was my brother."

Presently Mr. Smith's head dropped on his breast and clasping his hands, "Oh, what a queer world this is!" he sighed, "what a mighty queer world! A few weeks ago all was peaceful and quiet, now everything is topsy-turvy—men hurrying to and fro—drums beating—and—and I'm soon to quit my snug cabin for perhaps a soldier's grave."

Then lowering his voice, "Miss Jenny," he continued, "we know what is behind us, but we don't know what is ahead. Do you ever wish that you could get a peep into the future? I sometimes think I'd like to know how we'll all come out of this war; and yet perhaps if I was certain that I could have my fate revealed to me by just asking for it, I'd not dare ask."

Now whether it was the wakeful nights which the young woman had passed since her betrothed had gone away, or whether it was some influence more subtle and mysterious which at this moment seized upon her and overpowered her will, we do not pretend to say, but certain it is that, dropping her needle, she rose from the

chair and after gazing a moment, with an agitated countenance, towards the door which led into Josiah Woodbury's room, she rushed forward, and when Billy snatched up the light and hastened after her, he found her trying to open the closet where the Ancient kept concealed the mirror which had once belonged to Phebe Reed.

But the closet was locked, the old man had the key, and when Billy, who was a little startled by her behavior, asked what was the matter, Jane drew a long breath, then went silently back to her own chamber; nor would she gratify his curiosity, although he pressed her hard, for Mr. Woodbury did not wish others to know about the mysterious glass.

"I am glad," she said to herself, "that I was not able to look in it. But the uncontrollable impulse to do so may come upon me some day when the key is there, and then what may I see! In Cotton Mather's 'Wonders of the Invisible World,' I read of many strange things: the devil is always prowling around us: is it not wrong to try and lift the veil which hides the future? The Lord was very kind when he made us blind to it. It must have been the evil spirit which drew me towards the closet."

Then bowing her head she uttered a short prayer, while Mr. Smith looked on with a puzzled expression, and wished from the bottom of his heart that good news might soon come of Ethan Allen's expedition.

Just as she had done praying, the door opened and Mrs. M'Neil entered, followed by Mr. Woodbury and Knox, the latter carrying in his hand a sprig of apple-blossom, which he at once placed over David's portrait; then turning to greet Jane, he found her blue eyes resting full upon him, and speaking more thanks than ever tongue could have uttered. But while her face beamed with gratitude and affection, and as he took in all her beauty, a feeling of sadness came over him which pen cannot describe; "Oh, God," he murmured, "she thanks me, she is grateful to me; bitter reward!

Oh, if I could possess the heart of such a being! If she had given to me what she has given to David!"

But the Ancient, who did not know what his thoughts were, and who saw him exchanging fond glances with the girl, argued a very different state of affairs; and taking his arm he drew him closer to Jane, then placing one hand on his head, and the other on hers, "May the Almighty bless you both," he said. "May He keep the bullets from you, Aaron, and bring you safe and sound through the war, and may He spare my Jenny and not let her risk her precious life carrying any more powder-horns. Jenny and Aaron, two pretty names; they go well together. God bless you both, and one of these days—"

"Your arm is almost well, isn't it, Jane?" interrupted Knox, endeavoring to appear calm, yet in truth much embarrassed, for he feared that Mr. Woodbury, who was ignorant of the girl's betrothal to David Jones, might go on and say something that would give her pain.

"Yes, 'tis almost well," she replied, in a quick, nervous tone, for she, likewise, felt confused, "and I am able to sew, and have just finished the flag for your regiment."

"And Mr. Smith is color-bearer," put in the widow, who since the battle of Lexington had twice dreamt of Billy's battered hat, and who was not a little surprised by the modest way he had behaved towards her since that memorable day.

"And Mr. Smith will carry the flag like a man," said Jane, "and come back from the war covered with glory."

"Amen," added the Ancient, "and I prophesy that Captain Knox will come back a general, and then won't my Jenny be proud!"

"Well, I told Mr. Smith a while ago," pursued Mrs. M'Neil, that I was proud of him. But I hope that won't make him rash and that the next battle he gets into the bullets won't give his skull quite such a close shave as they did last month: one hair's breadth nigher and 'twould have been a case for the sexton."

While she was speaking her admirer hung his head and looked very modest indeed. When he was alone with Jane M'Crea, the remembrance of his cowardice did not affect him half so much as when she and the widow were both looking at him, and he shuddered to think what a single word from the girl might do.

"Well I want ye all to know," he said, presently raising his head, "that I'm going to disappoint none of you: I'm going to do my duty right up to the hub." Then turning to the young woman, "but Miss Jenny," he continued, "do you believe in presentiments? Are you any way superstitious?"

At this question Knox laughed and declared that if there ever was a woman made of common sense it was she; but Mr. Woodbury did not laugh, for he remembered the dream which she had once told him about. As for the girl herself she seemed confused and wanted to know what Billy meant by putting such a question.

"Well, I mean," he continued, "that I've got a strange mysterious feeling which I can't shake off, never had such a feeling afore: it is, that my happy days in Lexington are ended. It came on me all of a sudden since we've been talking here together."

"Nonsense!" put in Mrs. M'Neil, "you will, you shall, you must come back—with a wooden leg perhaps, but what does that matter as long as you come back? Aye, I'll have you here for cherry-picking next month—and for Thanksgiving—and—"

"Why, you'll be having him here all the time," interrupted Knox, frowning. "Do you think a soldier can quit his duty in that way? Alas, I fear there will be too many running home for the most trifling reasons. Oh, I pray you ma'am, set a good example to the other women, and let us alone till peace is declared, and then I promise you we'll have a grand jollification."

"Well, well, captain, so be it. But since you won't visit us, we'll travel to camp and visit you, eh? No harm in that?" Here the good widow slipped her arm through Jane's and wondering at her troubled look, declared that she should not sew another stitch.

"You are tired," she said, "come down below and enjoy yourself." Accordingly, they all proceeded to the little parlor, where for the next hour they sat around the table chatting and sipping out of a huge punch-bowl, which the dame never produced except on rare occasions.

At length, after Mr. Smith had five times pledged the health of his adored, he struck his fist on the table and grinned so funnily that she asked him to tell his happy thought.

But Billy only set up a tremendous roar, then looked at her out of the corner of his eye in such an odd way, that she bent toward him and whispered, with a blush, that she hoped it was nothing improper he was cogitating.

But instead of answering, he set up another roar louder than the first, then began to run his hands up and down his breast. "Yes," he said to himself, "true as I'm here that's what I'll do: I'll wear armor; I'll imitate the knights of old, the cavaliers, the heroes folks think so much of; I'll protect myself with good hard iron."

Then raising his voice again, "Happy thought! happy thought!" he cried, "glory! Yankee Doodle, glory!"

"He's getting drunk," whispered Mr. Woodbury to Jane M'Crea, "what a pity! Smith never knows when to stop."

"I say, cap," continued Billy, "it's mean, isn't it, to shoot a fellow below the waist? The breast is the proper place to aim at, eh? In boxing who'd think of hitting below the line?"

At this question both Knox and Jane laughed, but the widow, her two eyes squinting into one, looked scornfully at him.

"You must take the balls just as they come," said the dame, "and whatever happens, wherever you get hit, 'twill be in a glorious cause. Bear in mind Mr. Clark's sermon of last Sabbath; oh, I hope you treasured up his words!"

"I did indeed," returned Billy, then dropping his voice so that she could not hear, "the old cock's words trickled off me like water off a duck's back. Hi!—Ho!—Hum!—Ha-a-a!!" and he ended with another explosion of mirth so very violent that a couple of buttons snapped off his waistcoat and flew into Mrs. M'Neil's lap.

"You are extremely hilarious this evening," said the dame, with a serious and offended air.

"Am I? oh! indeed! well, p'raps I am. But it can't be helped; the punch is down and has got to have its way for awhile. But it'll work off, don't be uneasy." Then after staring at her a moment, "Alas!" he continued, "it may be the last I'll ever drink—the la-a-st," and as he finished the phrase two immense drops started out of his eyes and went trickling down his cheeks, where they finally mingled with the tobacco juice on his beard, and really it was an affecting as well as comic sight.

Then quickly, his expression changed, the tears vanished and clapping his hands, "God bless the parson!" he cried, so loud that you might have heard him at the meeting-house, "God almighty bless him!"

"Well, Mr. Clark is indeed a most worthy man, and the best exhorter we have had this good while," said the widow, "and it rejoices me to hear him praised. But methinks if he saw you now, he would grieve and say you had taken too much liquor."

"Too much is just enough. God bless the parson!" shouted Billy, struggling to rise from his seat. "Many's the time I've laid low to get a shot at him; but he's cunnin' and—"

Here Knox caught Billy's arm and interrupted him. "Smith, Smith, hold your tongue," he said, "you don't know what you're saying. Remember, 'tis our last evening here—to-morrow we march; pray don't make a fool of yourself."

"We march to-morrow, eh? do we? really?" Then pressing his hand to his forehead, "well yes, so we do. Post of honor—wooden leg—oh dear, dear, dear!"

We need not say that such extraordinary language and behavior distressed and puzzled Mr. Smith's friends, who did not know what he meant by—"trying to shoot the parson," and while Aaron held his arm, Mrs. M'Neil took the precaution to remove the punch-bowl.

For about a minute Billy endured their frowns and ominous whispers in silence, then suddenly snapping his fingers he began to sing 'Lucy Locket.' Before he had got through the first stanza he made a grab for Mrs. M'Neil's hand. This capped the climax; a flash of her eye told Knox what to do. Then while Mr. Woodbury opened the door, poor Billy was led away to his cabin and there placed on the bed, roaring out snatches from the Song of Liberty, and his last words as Aaron left him were—"Lord, Lord, don't I wish I could change skins with the parson! Ha, ha, ha! Shot at him a hundred times, and only hit him once. Ha, ha, ha! Slam bang! Boom!! Good night!!!"

And now let us leave him, muttering all kinds of nonsense to himself, and falling gradually asleep, like a thunder-storm passing away.

CHAPTER IX.

"GOOD Aaron, I love you because you love my David," were Jane M'Crea's first words next morning, as she looked at the apple-blossoms which her guardian had placed over the portrait of her betrothed.

"Oh, what shall I do without you? you are so cheering, so comforting; I wish you could stay by me, but to-day you march."

Then approaching the open window, she watched the glowing horizon: the small cloud which floated above it looked like a handful of sunbeams, an island of glory in the sky. In another moment the dewy meadow where the cows were grazing sparkled with

ten thousand gems, and a bobolink that was trying to balance himself on a mullein stalk, by the garden fence, flew into the air with a joyous carol. How Jane's bosom swelled as she beheld the sun rising, and making all the world so beautiful and happy!

"Is it shining on you, David?" she said, "tell me dear boy, where are you? Do you see this sun?"

Here her thoughts were interrupted by a well-known voice. "Inspiring weather, Miss Jenny, isn't it?" exclaimed Billy Smith, who had been admiring her from his cabin door. "I almost wish there was going to be a battle to-day. Why, I dreamt about more soldiers last night than I'll ever see, if I live a hundred years."

Now there was something about Billy that was a deadly foe to melancholy, and as he spoke the girl's face brightened and she inquired if he were ready to march.

"All ready," was the quick answer. "The Bible is in my knapsack with twenty plugs of tobacco—you see I take a good supply; I'd rather leave everything behind than my Bible and tobacco. And I've got, too, a piece of calico wrapped round the Holy Book—a strip off somebody's gown, a keepsake—something to remind me of my adored. And now, Miss Jenny, won't you give me something to keep you fresh in my memory? A few needles and thread and a chunk of beeswax 'll do."

The young woman at once threw him down what he wanted, then left the window, for she heard Mrs. M'Neil calling.

"No trouble now," said Billy with a grin, as he stowed the gift away in his knapsack, "no trouble now to sew that patch on my breeches. This calico is stout and strong and so is this here thread. But I ought to have mended my clothes afore, and not put it off till I'd get to camp. Alas! my ragged state comes from being a bachelor; but if my 'wisibles' is full of holes, what would folks say if they could see my stockings?"

Presently, he took his hat off the peg, then placing

it jauntily on his head, directed his steps to the front entrance of the tavern, muttering as he went along, "Lord what a fix I'm in! never thought a coon was a happy animal afore. But there's no backing out now—too late—got to go." Then, his face suddenly brightening, "But if I come back alive and marry the widow, I bet I'll get twice the crop of corn off these five acres that Harry M'Crea does. Yes, I bet I shall."

On reaching the porch of the Ordinary he found it quite deserted, nor was there a single person in the bar-room; but he heard voices, and, guided by the sound, he continued his way into the sitting-room where he found Mrs. M'Neil, Knox, Jane and Woodbury admiring the flag, which was now quite finished and ready for him to carry off.

And even while they were gazing at it the drums began to beat the assembly.

"Well, Jane," said Aaron, pressing her hand and with an almost stern expression on his face, "Time is up. I must go; but remember what I have told you: Obey me and keep out of harm's way, you know why."

"Best of friends, I will follow your commands," returned the young woman, a tear glistening in her eye, "and every time I shall look at the blossoms in my room, I will think of you. But, Aaron, take care of yourself, don't risk your life unnecessarily."

"But you'll visit us once in a while, Miss Jenny, won't you?" said Billy Smith, his voice quivering, for the drum was beating louder and louder.

"Yes, I promise you, Mrs. M'Neil and I will give you a surprise party some day," answered the girl, trying to smile, "may we not, Aaron?"

"I do not forbid it," replied the latter. "But come not too often. Rather surprise us with frequent letters. Not that I would not like to see you seven days in the week, but you know there will be hard duties to perform; we shall have to go on picket and to fight battles, and during some of your visits a stray ball might reach you and you might not escape as you did last month." Then dropping his voice to a whisper, "and

if a bullet pierced your heart, 'twould kill more than one."

"Yes, I go in for epistolary communication," said Billy, turning to the widow, "let's keep up a rattling fire of letters, eh?"

"Agreed," replied the dame, who, now that the parting hour had come, quite forgot her lover's improper behavior the evening before. "We'll not forget you. But be sure and let us know when there's to be a fight. I want to see one."

"A hero's grave!" sighed Billy, fixing his eyes upon her in such a touching way, that if he had only had the wit to ask her for her hand, she might have let him squeeze it. "A hero's grave!" Then, snatching up the flag, he rushed out of the house, muttering to himself, "what a damned scrape I'm in? Devil take the luck!"

Ten minutes later the Second Massachusetts Regiment, raised by order of the Provincial Congress, stood drawn up in line on the green, and we cannot wonder that Colonel Brewer's eye flashed with pride as he surveyed it. Six hundred finer looking men could not have been mustered for the defence of Liberty. And they were brave too; nor should the reader take exception to Billy Smith; wait and see, he may after all, do his duty and turn out a hero in the end.

It cannot be denied, however, that his countenance just now wears an expression unusually sedate. But if his comic air has vanished, yet how straight he stands! And how well the battered hat becomes him! with its black cockade and eagle feather, at which Mrs. M'Neil is squinting with all her might and main. And Knox, every inch a soldier, you well deserve Jane M'Crea's admiration, and Josiah Woodbury whispers to her that if he believed in resurrections, he might take him for Miles Standish come to life to have another fight.

But fine as the volunteers looked to an unpracticed eye, a martinet would have found enough to criticise in them.

Their garments, loose and of huge dimensions, were of as many different colors as the landscape; Knox's coat, was like the bark of a tree; Billy Smith's waistcoat spotted with green, looked as if it had been sprinkled with peas; while their home-made flaxen shirts, breeches fastened below the knees, long stockings, and cowhide shoes ornamented with brass buckles, gave them a rustic air, which would have made any of King George's officers laugh had he seen them.

Nor were their weapons according to regulation: Here was a Queen Ann musket, which years before had helped to conquer Canada, next to it an old French piece which had been at the siege of Louisburg; there were powder horns instead of cartridge-boxes, hardly a dozen bayonets; while the heavy, uncouth sword of the Colonel had been manufactured by the village blacksmith.

But on every hat was a black cockade and an eagle feather, which linked them to the rest of the army, and stamped them as soldiers of Liberty.*

Presently Jane M'Crea's face became suffused with a blush, for every man of the six hundred knew her, and a voice had called out, "three cheers for the girl that made our flag!" In another moment, far out over the meadows and woods, you might have heard the loud huzzas, then while the echoes were dying away, Colonel Brewer gave the command, "By platoons, right wheel, march!"

At once drum and fife struck up Yankee-doodle and off the regiment went: Jane with moistened eyes waved her hand, Mrs. M'Neil squinted at Billy Smith through a hole in her apron, Josiah Woodbury, carried away by the excitement, exclaimed, "what a pity I'm so old!"

Yes, they were off, followed by many a sigh—many a God bless you, from mothers, sisters, wives, and sweethearts, gathered along the edge of the green,—gone on their way to Bunker Hill and Trenton, Princeton and Germantown; gone to freeze and starve at

* See description of intrenching party on Bunker Hill, Dawson I. p. 51.

Valley Forge, to perish in prison ships ; gone,—who knows how many of them ? to witness the glorious triumph at Yorktown.

And as they marched along, Knox thought of the moonlight night when he heard Paul Revere galloping towards him, with the news that the British were coming. What changes since that night ! From peace to war the people had gone at a bound ; timid men, here and there, were still trying to hold them back—to recall them to their allegiance to the mother country : but destiny was beckoning them on and they were going.

And while Knox thought of this, Billy Smith kept straining his eyes toward a certain whitewood tree, whose majestic front could be seen towering above the other trees not far from the road.

And oh, how vividly imagination pictured to him a cosy nest in one of its hollow branches, far up out of harm's way !

"There," he sighed, "there the wind rocks the 'Parson' to sleep ; oh sweet, blessed home, where nothing ever disturbs him but the woodpecker's tap ! Happy coon ! would that I might change skins with thee ! I'd do it in the twinkle of an eye."

CHAPTER X.

"HEAVEN is smiling on me," thought Helen Jones, the morning of the eighteenth of May, as she stood gazing out of the window of her room in Boston, and saw an officer coming up the street waving his hand to her.

"Yes, Count von Meyer must have news of David." Then turning round she took a careful survey of herself in the mirror, and Nanny declared that she looked like a Queen.

"The Count," said the Indian woman, "is a person of influence, for I inquired all about him after he left us last evening. And Miss Helen, you must do your best

to please : just think, he's a count, and very rich, and one of these days he may carry off my pretty bird to his castle in Germany."

"A count, a count," murmured the girl, in a voice just loud enough for the other to hear, "and the youth who first told me about my lost brother, who guided me so many miles through the wilderness, is only a poor American."

"And a rebel," added Nanny ; "why child, you ought not to speak of them in the same breath."

"Well the one who procured me this fine apartment, and who certainly seems inclined to be my friend, is a mercenary," continued Helen Jones tossing her head, "and I hate mercenaries."

Then after pausing a moment to slip on her bracelets, "but if he has power, if he will assist David, oh I will do almost anything to please him."

"Mercenary! nonsense!" exclaimed Nanny, "he has come from Germany to help our king put down these saucy Yankees. Fie, Miss Helen! what would your dear father say if he could hear you talking so? He'd say that you were not worthy to wear that medal of his. Oh, child, remember who you are. It frightens me to think of what you might have told that young Yankee, when he was pressing your hand t'other evening just afore he said good-by, if I had not pulled you away from him. True he is handsome, and no doubt brave, but 'twould be no honor to have him for a lover. Just think, he helped rob the king of Ticonderoga!"

"Aye, so he did," returned Helen, her eyes flashing, yet at the same time her bosom heaved and you could see that more than one emotion was struggling within her, "God save the King!"

Here she took another view of herself in the glass, and as she did so smiled, and could not help thinking what a pretty fellow David must be if he resembled his twin sister.

Of course the reader will say that Helen Jones is vain and not at all like Jane M'Crea, who tossed all beauty to the winds and cared no more about the

praises which admiring swains lavished upon her than the rose cares for the bee which hums around it ; and no doubt the reader is right, she is vain and unfortunately too, very inexperienced.

In the seclusion of her Canadian home, she had seen little or nothing of the other sex, but gifted with a bright imagination, she had often thought about them and pictured them to herself as gallant cavaliers—knights such as those her father used to tell her of, who were valiant in battle, chivalrous to ladies, and incapable of performing a dishonorable act.

Fair, innocent creature ! how the blood rushed to her cheeks when presently she heard a knock on the door ! And when in another moment the tall, elegant figure of Count von Meyer passed across the threshold, and he fixed his keen gaze upon her, how her heart throbbed ! How blind she was to that which Jane M'Crea had seen at a glance ! The lewd mouth, the serpent glitter of his eye, the utter heartlessness stamped upon his face, were all lost to Helen Jones, and she smiled graciously at the low bow he made her, and wondered why her mother had kept her carefully at home, out of sight of men.

"I regret to say, Miss Jones," began the Count, when after a little pressing he had consented to take a chair, "I regret to say that I have not been able to get any certain news of your brother. But faithful to my promise, I have made inquiries about him, and at last, after much trouble—or rather pleasure, for I am serving a fair lady—I find that a member of Lord Percy's staff received a letter yesterday from a friend stationed at Ticonderoga—"

"Which has just been captured by the rebels," interrupted Helen.

"What ! indeed ! you are the first to bring us this news. I wish I had known it last evening," exclaimed the Hessian, evidently much astonished.

"Well, I was so fatigued, sir, that I forgot to mention it. But pray go on, I should not have interrupted you ; what were you going to say ?"

"I was going to say—but really this news astonishes me—I was going to say that this friend writes that a young man named David Jones had just arrived at the fort, bringing accounts of the excitement among the people in Massachusetts, and the probability of bloodshed. And the latter adds that the youth, who was a Canadian by birth, had joined the garrison, but that as he was well acquainted with the country around Boston, General Gage ought to send for him."

When Count von Meyer had finished speaking, Helen buried her face in her hands and thus remained for about a minute: "Oh, my God," she said to herself, "that youth was no doubt my lost brother. Why did I not ask the American who guided me here, how many British had fallen at Ticonderoga? He told me David was in Boston. Did he know that some evil had happened to him, and did not wish to reveal it? Alas! that may explain his startled look when he first saw me in the hunter's cabin; I resemble my brother, and he saw the likeness at once. Oh, David, David, where are you? what has happened?"

"Be not anxious about him," pursued the count, who shrewdly guessed the cause of her agitation. "I have already, as you see, got a clue which will make the rest of the search comparatively easy; this very day a ship sails for Halifax, and I will write to the commanding officer there, and get him to find out whether the youth mentioned in the letter is your brother. Therefore, do not indulge in gloomy forebodings; he may, it is true, have fallen at Ticonderoga, but then he may not; always look on the bright side. And when he turns up safe and sound, as I am sure he will, he shall not wait long for promotion: I have influence, and as I know that to see him in a high position would be for you the greatest of joys, so will I exert myself to that end."

"Thanks! generous, noble sir," said Helen, touched to the very core of her heart, by his words. "My whole ambition is indeed wrapped up in David. His father was a soldier and I want him to be like his fath-

er. Oh, do befriend him and take—alas, what else can I give?—the grateful thanks of a poor orphan girl.”

“Not poor, rich! untold wealth is yours,” exclaimed the count, bending slightly towards her, while his powerful eyes seemed to search into her very soul. “You have that which a diamond mine could not give—beauty.”

At these flattering words, Helen blushed and at the same time felt the singular sensation come over her which Jane M'Crea had once experienced; 'twas as if he were drawing her towards him, and although she would fain have dropped her eyes to the floor, something kept them riveted upon his eyes, and gradually everything in the room, including Count von Meyer himself, faded away, until at length she was conscious of nothing but two inconceivably brilliant spots, which seemed to attract her, yet held her fast to her seat.

“And you would rejoice beyond anything to have your brother on General Gage's staff?” he continued after passing his hand along her arm a moment, then taking her hand and pressing it.

Before she answered he had to repeat the question. Thus roused by his touch, and looking around with such a dreamy bewildered air that Nanny was frightened,—

“Oh, yes, beyond anything,” she replied. “Then it shall be,” he went on, dropping her hand, and leaning back in his chair, “yes it shall be; but what I say is between us, it must go no farther.” Here he glanced at the Indian woman, who saw by the expression of his face that her presence was irksome to him. Accordingly, without waiting for any plainer hint, she withdrew into an adjoining room, feeling, however, not altogether at her ease about her young mistress, who had appeared at one moment as if she were falling into a trance.

“I believe in sorcerers,” said Nanny, as she strained her ears to listen, “and if I was not convinced this man must be what folks declare he is—a worthy nobleman, who has come to serve our king, I would say that the further off we kept from him the better.”

While she was thus soliloquizing, Count von Meyer drew his chair closer to Helen's, then in a low voice, "Let me now," he began, "confide something to you, Miss Jones, which I wish no other ears but yours to hear—it is a great secret. But if you will keep it faithfully, and do what I am about to ask of you, you will be rendering me a service which will far more than repay all I am going to do for your brother."

"Oh speak, tell me what it is, give me a chance to show my gratitude; order me any task you please, and I will perform it; confide to me any secret, and it shall be as if you had never uttered it," returned Helen in a trembling voice, for although anxious to serve the count and highly flattered by the confidence which he reposed in her, she had not yet entirely recovered from the mysterious feeling that had seized her a few minutes before.

"Truly, you are a soldier's daughter," he continued, his heart already throbbing in anticipation of lewd pleasures; "never did medal hang on worthier breast than yours. Well, my secret is this: I have fallen in love with an American girl. She lives, I believe, in Lexington, a village twelve or thirteen miles from here; at any rate, 'twas there I met her on the nineteenth of last month, when our troops were marching through the place; and she was in the company of a very old man, her grandfather, or perhaps, even her great grandfather. Her hair is the most striking thing about her; 'tis the longest I ever saw in my life, and jet black, which goes exquisitely with her fresh, rosy cheeks. She has, moreover, a pert, saucy air, and taking her all in all, is a woman not soon to forget. But alas! I don't know her name, nor where she lives, in fact I know nothing at all about her except what I have just related, and in order to obtain the information I want, will require great skill on your part."

"Then you wish me to go to Lexington and learn as much as possible about this fair rebel?" said Helen, not a little piqued as well as surprised by this unexpected confession.

"I do ; cross the lines at night, dressed as a common country maiden ; leave your bracelets, medal and every other ornament behind, and make believe that you are a sister or friend of some Yankee soldier. In fact, do your best to communicate with this young woman, and tell her that her admirer in Boston—he who gave her a rosebud the day Lord Percy's troops were marching through the village—sends her his best love. Say to her, too, that I am dying for an interview, that no perils shall deter me from having one. In fact, be my friend and advocate in this delicate matter, and if you succeed, your brother will have good cause to rejoice. But remember, breathe not a word of this, even to your servant Nanny. Not that I would be ashamed to have it known that I am enamored of a poor American peasant, for a man of my rank can afford to stoop and give his hand to the poorest ; but while the war lasts such an act would be misunderstood, and might draw suspicion upon me."

Count von Meyer now changed the subject of conversation, well pleased with Helen's acquiescence in his wishes, and began to talk to her about the state of the city.

"Many of the citizens," said he, "tainted with rebellion have gone away, and General Gage would have let every one of them depart, had not the loyal portion of the inhabitants—the Tories as they are called—urged him to stop the exodus, lest after the rebels should have removed all their effects, they might burn the place down. But the loyal families are quite numerous, and by far the most genteel, so that our society is excellent, and, moreover, in a few days we may expect General Howe, General Clinton and General Burgoyne, with ten thousand more troops, and when they arrive, fancy how gay the city will be ! And I will make it a point that you go to every ball and enjoy yourself to the utmost. Such a rare flower must not lie hidden : the very way you wear your hair gives you a most piquant expression, which will set the officers wild."

Here he dropped his eyes on her bracelets and declared that the contrast between the gold and the snow-white hand was exquisite, at which open flattery, of course Helen blushed; yet at the same time, she was more pleased than we can express, and gave herself up to visions of the conquests which she was going to make in society.

"And if you sing," he continued, "you must join the choir of our church. But whether you have a good voice or not, let me urge you to be faithful in attending divine service. You are alone here with the Indian woman, and you are an orphan; my heart feels for you and I would not, for the world, have you fall into neglectful habits. You have no doubt, had a careful, pious mother; think well of all that she has told you, and believe me, you will be none the less admired for being religious."

At the mention of her mother's name tears came to Helen's eyes. "Oh, yes," she said, "I will try and never miss divine service. If dear mother were alive, 'twould rejoice her to see me keep holy the Lord's day, and I will follow her wishes just as if she were living. Oh, sir, you are a good, kind-hearted, generous christian to befriend me as you have, and to give me such excellent counsel."

At these words Count von Meyer rose and gently taking her hand assured her that he had only told her what it was his duty to tell her. "I am a man of the world," he said, "and know the temptations to which youth and beauty are exposed; I deserve no praise for the advice I have given. And now, Miss Jones, before I leave you, let me repeat that when your brother arrives his promotion shall be rapid, while as regards your trip to Lexington I'll soon let you know exactly what day I wish you to undertake it."

"I am ready at any time," said Helen, "I am not afraid."

"Of course not; you are a soldier's daughter, and 'twould seem as though a kind Providence had thrown you in my way on purpose to help me in my courtship.

God bless you ; and now, before I retire, let me take a guardian's liberty, I am forty, you are only—"

"Nineteen," said Helen smiling.

"Sweet nineteen!" and as he spoke he bent down and pressed his lips to her forehead. Then making low obeisance he withdrew, leaving the artless girl thoroughly deceived.

CHAPTER XI.

NEVER had Lexington been so quiet as the first few days after the departure of Colonel Brewer's regiment. The women, neglecting their household duties, would stand by the hour around the mound on the green talking about the war ; the ploughs remained untouched in the furrows, the blacksmith's forge was silent as death, and Buckman's tavern might as well have taken down its sign-board and nailed up the door, so far as business was concerned, for hardly a single person dropped in to take a drink, and Mrs. M'Neil declared that she was going to be ruined.

But the third time Josiah Woodbury heard her say this he asked Jane M'Crea for a fresh piece of calamus root, then rising from the bench where he had been sunning himself, vowed that she should not be ruined if he could prevent it.

"There's some work in me yet," he said, as he tottered off to the field behind the Ordinary, "I can sweat a little more." And with such energy and good-will did the old man toil, that Harry M'Crea himself could not have done much better.

"The Ancient is a hundred years old and surely we can labor in the field as well as he," said Jane, addressing a group of women one morning. "Do not despond ; though your husbands and sons have gone to the war the Lord will help you." And while she thus endeavored to raise their drooping spirits, she went herself into Mrs. M'Neil's garden and there hoed out the weeds and even cheered Mr. Woodbury with a song.

But her voice was not what it used to be, and after listening awhile he shook his head. "Poor Jenny!" he said, "I myself have put queer notions into you. But they would have done no harm except for these troubles. If the war had not broken out, all would have gone smooth enough and before the dog-days you'd have been a happy bride; nor would it have mattered a straw which one you took, David or Aaron; they're both as good as gold. But now you are all alone and I can't see my way through the fog."

One evening, after she had been working many hours in the garden and won hearty praise from the widow, who declared that she was a trump and as good at the hoe as she was at the needle, she found herself in her chamber gazing at the withered blossoms over the portrait of her betrothed.

In the twilight the image itself could scarcely be distinguished, yet she knew it so well that she fancied she saw it as clearly as if it were noon, and presently David himself seemed to rise before her.

"Dear boy," she said, "'tis marvellous how I love you! you are bound round my heart by a coil which nothing can undo. Oh, sweetest mystery of my life! When you first came to Lexington, I used to laugh at you, and tease you, and once I even called you ugly. How changed I am since those days! To clasp you now to my breast, to know that we should never again be separated—oh, that would be Heaven! But is it ever to be? What is my destiny?"

As she spoke these words, suddenly, as once before, the impulse came over her to gaze into the mirror which Josiah Woodbury kept so carefully concealed; but she heard footsteps on the staircase and hesitated, for it would not do to be caught trying to open the forbidden closet.

"I have sometimes thought," she said, as she listened with throbbing heart to the footsteps, "that the Ancient's superstition in regard to this glass was the only silly thing about him. Yet, who knows? It may be but one among a thousand mysteries. Cotton Mather

relates how the house of William Morse at Newberry was infested with demons, whose invisible hands used to snatch the good man's ink-horn away while he was writing, and move a heavy chest about from room to room, and who used to make his son bark like a dog; oh, yes, all this and much more does Mr. Mather relate,* and this mirror once belonged to him, and he got it from a witch. Did not the Witch of Endor call Samuel from the dead? why may not some invisible seer reveal in this glass what is yet hidden from me? That which is to come is as true and real as that which is gone; the Lord often spoke through Prophets; wonders have not ceased."

While she was thus talking to herself, Mrs. M'Neil entered, bringing back the Shakespeare which she had been reading. "This is the greatest book ever written, except the Bible," said the dame, as she placed the volume on the table. "I think, child, that you ought to read more of it. Folks talk about the Pilgrim's Progress—sha! what is Christian compared with Jack Falstaff? Ha! ha! ha! yes, read about fat Jack, and you'll laugh and grow fat again; for, do you know you're not as hearty looking as you were. But pray, what are you doing up here in the dark?"

Without making any response Jane lit the lamp, and seating herself at the table, opened the book with a sigh.

"Well, well, it's the old story," muttered the widow, after watching her a moment, then turning and leaving the room, "the old story: David is away, and so poor Jenny is like a body cut in two, half here, half with him wherever he may be. Poor Jenny!"

As soon as she was gone the girl set resolutely to work, to read the only one of Shakespeare's plays with which she was not familiar. The impulse to gaze in the mysterious glass had filled her with a horror indescribable; it had now left her, but it might come back if she allowed her thoughts to dwell upon the subject, and she hoped that Macbeth would make her forget

* Cotton Mather's *Magnalia Christi Americana*.

all about it. It would, no doubt, have been better to have gone over again the 'Merry Wives of Windsor,' or 'All's Well that Ends Well,' in fact any of his comedies or tragedies except this very one: but as we have remarked, Macbeth was new to her, and the opening lines:

"When shall we three meet again,
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?"

seemed so full of weird mystery, that she was fascinated and hurried along in spite of herself, until at length, when she came to the fourth act, where Macbeth is in the cave with the witches, you might almost have fancied from the expression of her face, that she was in the cave too; and when a little farther on still, she got to where the shadows of the eight kings appear and move slowly one after the other before Macbeth, she could contain herself no longer, and began to read the passage aloud:

Macbeth.—"Thou art too like the spirit of Banquo; down!
Thy crown does sear mine eye-balls; and thy hair,
Thou other gold-bound brow art like the first;
A third is like the former. Filthy hags!
Why do you show me this? A fourth? Start, eyes!
What! will the line stretch out to the crack of doom?
Another yet? A seventh? I'll see no more.
And yet the eighth appears, who bears a glass,
Which shows me many more, and some, I see
That two fold balls and sceptres carry,
Horrible sight!

Here her fingers unclasped themselves from the book, the impulse to gaze in the haunted mirror had come over her again, the lines which she had just read brought it back with tenfold power, and seizing the lamp, she hurried into the Ancient's room, where she began to search for the key of the closet. But although she felt in the pockets of his Sunday suit, then under his pillow, and carefully examined the mantel-piece as well as the top of the closet, it was not to be found.

"He must have the key with him," thought Jane, "but I'll try another one, it may fit."

With this she hastened back to her own chamber and presently returned, bringing a somewhat larger key, which she thrust into the lock. But it turned with difficulty, and in her impatience (for Mr. Woodbury might appear at any moment) she gave the closet a violent shake in hopes that the door might spring open; and while she was shaking it, she heard something fall inside.

"'Tis the mirror!" she cried, starting back, "and I've broken it! Oh, woe! woe!"

Just then the old man, who had heard the moving of the furniture, and wondered what was going on in his bedroom, entered. His sudden appearance, and the feeling of awe which was upon Jane, caused her to tremble so that Mr. Woodbury was for a moment unnerved, and in a quivering voice asked what was the matter.

"Are you trying," he said, "to get a peep in the prophetic glass? Perhaps you ought to thank me for keeping it hidden; oh, child, what are you about?"

Jane did not answer him immediately, but bowed her head and groaned; then clasping her hands she looked up and confessed that she had tried to open the closet, and that in doing so she believed the mirror had fallen down and got broken.

When the Ancient heard this, he remained several minutes perfectly silent, you would scarcely have thought he breathed; then in a low, mournful tone, "well, Jenny," he said, "I won't scold you; the mirror was a link which bound me to the past. 'Twas once Phebe's—dear Phebe's. But who knows? all happens for the best; and now that it is broken, I'll tell what I never told you before: Phebe herself didn't like to look in it, and I verily believe she suspected that there was something mysterious about it. Hanging a witch doesn't put her out of existence, and the evil spirit of the hag to whom this glass once belonged, was no doubt hovering around it many and many a time. But now come, here is the key, open the closet and look."

In another moment Jane was stooping with her lamp over countless fragments of crystal; then after heaving a deep sigh, at the destruction which she had caused, she began to sweep them together; and as she did so it really seemed as if each glittering piece were vital with life, for without any conscious effort on her part they all glided into place and presently a face was gazing up at her which might have been her own, but the seams which traversed it rendered the image so confused that not one but a score of distorted, grinning heads seemed to be peeping out of the closet floor, and on the largest of them was a drop of blood!

"Come, come, Jenny," said Mr. Woodbury, "take the rubbish away and have done with this unlucky business; if you stay kneeling there much longer you may see something which you'd rather not see."

"That I have seen already," murmured the young woman, as with trembling hand she brushed the shattered glass into her apron, "God knows what it may portend!" Then without another word she hastened down into the garden, where in the dim twilight she dug a hole and buried it, and as if to make sure that it would not come up from its grave, she tramped the earth down with all her might, then placed over the spot a heavy stone.

She had just done this when Mrs. M'Neil summoned her into the little parlor. "There's news!" cried the dame, "great news! make haste and hear it."

At once the girl flew to the widow's side with throbbing heart and prepared to hear the worst; and as she went she murmured, "great news! bloody news! as horrible as my own image in the closet!"

In the sitting-room she found Mrs. M'Neil and the Ancient listening to a messenger, who had just arrived from Connecticut with tidings of the capture of Ticonderoga.

"'Tis a glorious victory!" he was saying, as she entered, "a glorious victory! lots of powder and cannon, and General Ward's army will be ever so much

encouraged when they hear of it. I'm now on my way to camp to tell it to them, and wouldn't have stopped here only that I wanted a sip of the rum for which Buckman's tavern is famous."

"And that you shall have," exclaimed the widow, "nor shall you pay a cent for it either. Business has fallen off immensely since these troubles began, and by rights I ought to charge double for what you drink, to make up for all I've lost ; but to please Mr. Woodbury and Jane M'Crea, who are both bursting with joy at this victory, I'll liquor you free."

"And you, too, are bursting with joy, are you not ?" said the Ancient, who was not altogether satisfied about the good woman's patriotism.

The latter shrugged her shoulders, then with a significant squint, "I bet on the side that wins," she replied. "This war isn't going to end as soon as folks think ; taking a fort don't signify much. But here's the bottle and I've no objection to have you drink Ethan Allen's health."

While Mr. Woodbury and the messenger went on to pledge their faith in the Green Mountain boys, Jane M'Crea's heart kept throbbing violently, and when at length the old man inquired how many had been killed in the fight, her brain reeled, and she might have sunk to the floor but for the table which supported her.

"Only one, and he was a redcoat," replied the other, "so we may call it a bloodless victory."

"Who was he ? do you know his name ?" inquired Jane, vainly striving to keep down her emotion.

"Know his name ? Ha ha, ha, ha ! 'Twill be bother enough keeping a tally of our lads who fall in this war, without troubling ourselves about the enemy."

At these bitter words she gave him a reproachful look, then bowing her head, "alas !" she sighed, "uncertainty, keenest of tortures, is now to be my ghost. Oh, David, where are you ?" As she breathed his dear name, tears came to her eyes, and a feeling almost of despair seized her.

But presently, she recalled the words of the psalm-

ist, 'Why art thou cast down, oh my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope in God.'

"Oh, yes," she said to herself, "I will hope in Him, and pray: David may after all be alive and praying, too, at this very moment. It is the Evil Spirit who fills me with vague alarms. Oh Lord, on Thee I lean; in all things I bow to Thy holy will."

With this she turned away, and began to prepare the evening meal. But her emotion had not escaped the sharp eye of the widow, who sighed, "Poor Jenny, I know what troubles you," then after watching her a moment, "but child," she said, "your hand is bleeding!"

"Why sure enough, I have cut it!" exclaimed Jane, "I did not notice it before."

"The broken glass," whispered Mr. Woodbury, leaning towards her, "always dangerous to handle, is it a bad hurt!"

"Oh, no, just enough blood to stain one of the plates, and that is how Mrs. M'Neil found it out."

With this she wrapped a rag round the wound, then continued her work, and did her best not to think of the prophetic mirror, which was now buried under ground, nor of the Hessian officer whom she had met a few weeks before, and who had left such a strange impression on her.

"I have a presentiment," she said, "but I will not believe in it; God will protect me." Presently she became conscious of a calm, holy influence stealing over her: 'twas as if another soul were whispering to her soul, words of cheer and hope, and as she felt it, she recalled a passage which she had read in the life of the Reverend Samuel Newman, the lively preacher, the Preaching Liver, as he was called. It was as follows: "'Tis a faulty piece of insensibility among too many of the faithful, that they do little consider the guard of Holy Angels, wherewith our Lord Jesus Christ wonderfully supplies us against the mischief and malice of wicked spirits."*

* Cotton Mather's *Magnalia Christi Americana*.

"Yes," she said to herself, "a good angel is no doubt hovering near me at this moment; he came when I called on the Lord. I will cling to prayer, and keep cheerful, and not worry any more about the future. If I never see David again, God's will be done." As she spoke these words her countenance, reflecting the inner light which had spread over her soul, brightened so much that the widow, who was still watching her, was puzzled to account for it. Mr. Woodbury, likewise, observed the change, and while they sat at the supper-table, declared that she was beginning to look like her old self again: "Nothing is wanting," he said, "but the roses on your cheeks, and those will come after a few more victories."

And when the repast was over, Jane took a seat beside the old man and while she patted his wrinkled hand, thought of how bravely he had kept up his spirits since the death of Phebe Reed. "'Tis more than half a century," she said to herself, "since Phebe left him; yet he still calls her his betrothed; he knows that he will meet her again."

Before the household separated for the night Mrs. M'Neil told the messenger that she intended to accompany him to the camp on the following day, an excursion which the Ancient highly approved of. "Yes," said the latter, "let us pay captain Knox and Billy Smith a visit; we'll bring 'em the news about Ticonderoga."

"Ticonderoga!" murmured Jane, shuddering at the ominous word, then quickly driving it from her thoughts. "Yes, yes," she said, "let us visit the camp; I have never seen one. We'll give our friends the first surprise party."

With this understanding they withdrew, Mrs. M'Neil thinking of Billy Smith and of the presents she was going to bring him, and Jane M'Crea wishing that it were already the morrow, that she might see again the honest, faithful Aaron, whose words always brought more strength to her heart than the words of anybody else.

“How good he is!” she said, as she laid her head on the pillow. “Although I refused to be his bride, he is the same to me as ever; no envy, no malice, no cold reproach. If he suffers he hides it well; such as he are predestined.”

CHAPTER XII.

THE next morning—the thirtieth of May—the inmates of Buckman’s tavern were up bright and early, and when the sun was just peeping above the horizon, the farm wagon rattled away with them towards Cambridge.

Jane M’Crea held the reins, Mrs. M’Neil sat beside her, erect, determined and squinting straight ahead, while Mr. Woodbury made himself comfortable on a pile of straw in the bottom of the vehicle, where he smoked his corncob pipe in high glee. The bucket at his feet was full of honey, to be equally divided between Billy Smith and Knox, and besides the honey was a basket of eggs, a jug of maple syrup, a roll of foolscap, half a bushel of goosequills, and some bottles marked ‘Jamaica Rum,’ but filled—alas! for Billy Smith—with nothing stronger than elderberry ink.

The whole way to camp Jane kept up her spirits wonderfully, there was even a little color on her cheeks, which there had not been for a month, and the messenger, who accompanied them on horseback, could not restrain his admiration of her. “I knew,” he said, “that the news I brought yesterday would make you all happy; but Miss M’Crea is the happiest person I’ve met since I left home, and if she wasn’t busy driving I’d ask her to sing us a song in honor of Ethan Allen.”

“Ethan Allen!” murmured Jane, with a sigh which reached the widow’s ear. “But no, I won’t think of him; I must not forget my prayer of yesterday.”

And so, after a short, sharp struggle with herself, her face again brightened, and as they went along, if she did not sing she chatted quite pleasantly, and edi-

fied the Ancient and the messenger by her patriotic sentiments ; at which Mrs. M'Neil was not a little puzzled, and more than once said to herself, "I'm be switched if I can understand the gal ; she blows hot and cold and acts like one that don't know her own mind."

It so happened that they drove to the very spot where Colonel Brewer's regiment had pitched their tents, viz., the foot of Prospect Hill, Cambridge, and the first person to greet them when they arrived, was Mr. Smith, whom they met crossing the road with a number of canteens slung on his shoulder, which he had been filling with water at a spring near by.

"Hooray!" he cried, the instant he recognized them, "hooray! fetched any cookies or sweetmeats? Lord, you can't tell how I've missed you!" Here he squeezed Mrs. M'Neil's hand, while at the same time he nodded to Jane and Mr. Woodbury.

"I say, what did you fetch me good? Nothing? Well, never mind, you're sweetmeats enough yourself," he continued, looking at the widow with an expression which sorely tried Jane M'Crea's gravity.

"Well, Mr. Smith," returned the dame, blushing and fixing her Cyclops eye on the bullet hole in his hat—which be it known had really bored a way into her heart, for she admired bravery,—“Soldiering seems to agree with you; surely, you don't suffer for want of 'wittles,' why you're lookin' splendid!”

"Splendid!" repeated Billy to himself, and at the same time he straightened out his back-bone and put on his most martial air. "Splendid! Ha! She's pickled safe enough; five acres and no children, ha! ha! ha!" and the laugh inside of him came within an ace of bursting out, and if it had he certainly would have made a fool of himself.

"Well, how's Aaron?" inquired Mr. Woodbury, slowly getting out of the wagon. "We've lots of stuff for both of you; where is he?"

"Oh, cap's well and not five minutes off; but before we go to him let me put your nag away in yonder shed."

Accordingly, he unharnessed the old farm horse, who recognized him at once and neighed for joy to see him again; then having taken out of the wagon the various presents which his friends willingly helped him to carry, he conducted them to a piece of rising ground where the Second Massachusetts regiment was engaged in throwing up a breastwork.

"When we first arrived," said Billy, "this land was all sowed with rye; but in less time than it takes to count a hundred we had trampled it down so that you would not have believed any grain had ever been growing here. And, Lord, how the farmer did 'cuss'! But our colonel told him that he had better enlist or move away, as we were going to turn his whole place into a chain of forts; and we've made a pretty good beginning, haven't we? Look!" Here he pointed out to Mrs. M'Neil, for 'twas to her he addressed his remarks, the line of earth which marked redoubt number one.

"All day we toil with pick, and spade," he continued, "and cap. declares that I'm a better worker than nine out of ten. But here he comes. Hooray!"

Sure enough, Knox, who had espied them from a distance, was seen approaching at a rapid pace, and Mr. Woodbury, without waiting for him to come up, cried out, "Bravo! Miles Standish over again; God bless the old Puritan stock!"

"You can't tell how glad we are to see you," exclaimed Jane, when in another moment Aaron grasped her hand.

"Yes, mighty glad," put in the widow. "Why Lexington got so lonesome that really I thought we'd die and we couldn't put off our visit any longer."

"And they've fetched lots of good things, cap," said Billy Smith. "Just look! Honey, maple syrup, eggs and"—dropping his voice to whisper—"rum enough for half a dozen spree."

"I hope not," returned Knox frowning.

"Oh sha! cap. But never mind," then throwing his eyes on Mrs. M'Neil, he muttered something which

sounded to her ears very like 'sweetmeats,' at which she blushed, and really in her new calico gown with nicely fitting stomacher she looked almost handsome.

After watching her a moment in silent admiration, our friend bethought himself of the canteens, which he still had slung across his shoulder, then requesting Mrs. M'Neil not to go on without him he hurried to the breastwork where he delivered them to their respective owners, after which at the same rapid gait he came back to the side of his adored.

With slow steps the party now proceeded towards a tent which stood about fifty yards from the redoubt, and as they went along Knox informed Jane M'Crea and the Ancient, who walked one on either side of him, that his regiment had only sixteen of these canvas coverings, but that they had little cause to grumble, as many regiments had not a single one.

"Well, it looks very snug," said Jane when presently they reached the tent, "and you have surrounded it with a tiny breastwork."

"That is meant to keep out the water when it rains," remarked Knox.

"And 'twas I dug it," put in Billy Smith. "And thanks to your needles and thread, Miss Jenny, I've sewed the canvas up so tight that there is only one leak; but that I don't mind, for it helps ventilation. But Lord! you should have seen us night afore last, when the thunder-gust passed over."

"Why, what happened?"

"What happened? Ha, ha! The wind turned our tent upside down and sent it dancing off almost to the Mystic river, leaving cap. in his shirt grinning at the lightning and me in my—well I forget what I had on."

"Well, the wetting hasn't done you any harm," said Mrs. M'Neil, with the faintest tinge of crimson on her cheek, caused perhaps by his last remark.

"No, that it hasn't; I feel hearty as a buck." As he spoke he gave her an affectionate glance, which she answered by a no less affectionate squint, and while

one said to himself, "She's hooked fast enough; no hurry;" the other said, "What the deuce makes him hang fire?"

But Billy's backwardness did not come from want of love, and there is little doubt had Jane M'Crea not discovered him hiding in the hollow on the nineteenth of April he would ere this have brought matters to a crisis.

"But some day," he said, "when I have proved to Miss Jenny that I'm really a hero, I'll quietly give Mrs. M'Neil a surprise party and ask her to change her name."

Such were his thoughts as he followed Jane M'Crea into the tent, (he had reasons for wishing to enter before Knox and the widow), and it was with some anxiety that he watched her countenance.

The first thing the girl did was to smile, and certainly it was a novel and amusing sight. Stretching from side to side of the canvas dwelling was a rope, on which hung three pairs of socks, five powder horns, and a coat with a fishing line and cork float dangling from one of the pockets. On the board floor to the right lay Aaron's blanket, carefully folded, with a Bible on top of it, while to the left was another blanket half covered with plugs of tobacco, and near the tobacco was a piece of paper loosely rolled up, which looked very like a leaf from Deuteronomy.

"Don't tell," whispered Billy, as she stooped to examine the paper, and found that it was full of fish-hooks. "It's the only leaf I've torn out: please don't tell."

"You may trust me," returned Jane, handing him his property, which he quickly hid away, "but I should have been better pleased not to have made the discovery. I begin to fear—but never mind, remember!"

"Oh yes, I do remember. How could I ever forget your kindness and charity? But for you where would I be now? you got me made color-bearer on purpose to encourage me, and I solemnly promise that in future I'll read the Bible as regularly as cap. does, just to please you."

"I would rather have you do it from a higher motive," whispered the girl, "but hist! here they come."

As Mrs. M'Neil entered, her eyes fell at once on the Bible, and she gave an approving nod, then went on to express wonder that more than a single person could get along in such a small place.

"Well, 'twas meant only for cap," returned Billy; but we couldn't bear to let him have it all to himself, we thought he might feel lonely. And as he isn't a bit 'ristocratic, he don't mind me and a few others bunking along with him."

Then lowering his voice, "Mrs. M'Neil," he said, "how'd you like to follow the drum?"

"Oh sha!" replied the widow, giving him a coy glance, the meaning of which he understood well enough, then dropping her eyes to the floor.

Once more our friend silently congratulated himself on the victory which he had obtained over her heart, and after watching her a moment with the faintest giggle, he proposed that they should go visit the redoubt.

"Oh yes, do," said Mrs. M'Neil; "I want to see one."

Accordingly off they went, Knox and Jane leading the way, and all in the best of humor.

"This makes me feel young again," exclaimed Mr. Woodbury, when they reached the earth-work and stopped to look at the swarm of men busy with pick and spade.

"Well, it's capital exercise," said Billy, "and we are at it every day from reveille, which beats at four o'clock. We only get an hour's drill; but that doesn't matter much, for we're all brave and know how to use our guns. The main thing is to surround Boston as fast as possible with a chain of forts. The sooner we do that the sooner the war will be over, and oh, then won't I be a happy man!"

"Let us hope so," put in Mrs. M'Neil, who wanted to tease him a little, "for even should you fall, your death would be the death of a martyr, and in a happier world than this, you would receive your reward."

"Martyr! ugh!" murmured Billy, an icy cold feeling passing along his back. "I'd rather stay above ground with two wooden legs and one eye, than be stuck into a horrid hole in the churchyard, even with a monument on the top of me a hundred feet high and covered all over with wreaths and forget-me-nots."

"And of course you've given up amusements of every kind?" pursued the dame, "No more going after cat-fish and eels, eh!"

"No, indeed," responded Billy in a whisper, and glancing nervously towards Jane M'Crea. "We can't spare the time. But I did bring a fishing-line with me just to keep me in mind of other days, for I sometimes think I'll never be so happy again."

"Oh, you mustn't talk in that gloomy way. It makes me feel bad; it does indeed." And here she was telling the plain truth, for women are strange beings, and from having once despised Mr. Smith, she had now worked herself into such a state of exaltation over him that there was no holding her back, and considering the shadows and misfortunes which must darken certain parts of our narrative, she is a creature to be pitied.

While this by-play was going on between the lovers, Knox was describing to Jane and Mr. Woodbury various points of interest.

"That high ground to the left," he said, "is Bunker Hill. 'Tis not fortified yet; but it commands the city, and I doubt if the enemy will let us hold it without a struggle."

"I suppose not," returned the girl, drawing closer to him, while at the same time there was a quick beating of her heart at the word, 'struggle;' "but surely General Ward must have men enough to repulse any attack?"

"Well, so I should think, the besieging army can hardly number less than sixteen thousand. But—" here Aaron dropped his voice—"our soldiers are wild as colts, and unless you humor them they won't drill or do anything."

"I hope Billy Smith sets his comrades a good ex-

ample?" inquired Jane, likewise in an undertone, "for I take a deep interest in him and want you to push him along as much as you can."

"Well, he was out all last night bobbing for eels, and was not at roll-call this morning. But I still hope he'll change for the better—he has already shown that he has courage, and I promise you to do all I can for him."

"And pray what troops are off yonder, towards Roxbury?" asked the Ancient.

"Massachusetts men, sir. They number about four thousand, and are under General Thomas, an excellent officer, who saw a great deal of service in the French and Indian war. He has eight or nine cannon mounted on his redoubt, which is quite finished, and I don't believe our right wing could be in safer hands. Just this side of Roxbury are a thousand Rhode Islanders under Nathaniel Greene, likewise a capital officer; indeed I think him a genius. Some object that he is a Quaker, but when a battle comes they will find out that he is no coward. Why, I heard him say yesterday that godliness and gunpowder were all the better for being mixed."

At this remark Mr. Woodbury laughed and said he agreed with Nat. Greene.

"This hill on which we are standing," continued Knox, is called Prospect Hill, and forms the left of our line, and in the village of Cambridge yonder General Ward has his headquarters, with eleven thousand Massachusetts troops. Colonel Putnam is also encamped there, with a fresh band from Connecticut, full as good as those who left him to join Ethan Allen."

"And Allen has captured Ticonderoga," said the Ancient. "I wonder I did not tell you this before. 'Twas a bloodless victory; only one man killed and he a redcoat."

"No? Is it true?" exclaimed Aaron, glancing at Jane, who was now leaning heavily on his arm.

"Yes, it is true," replied the young woman. "And thank the Lord for such a good beginning of our

struggle for Independence!" Then after a sigh, "but go on; I'll talk more about it by and by."

"Yes, the news is so glorious that it fairly takes her breath away," said Mr. Woodbury. "Jenny, Jenny, what ails you?"

"Oh, nothing, do go on," said Jane, giving her guardian a look so earnest and pathetic, that it was hard for him to suppress his own deep emotion.

After a pause of nearly a minute, Knox proceeded, but the tone of his voice was changed; there was a quivering in it which the old man wondered at.

"Well, how does Putnam manage these fresh volunteers? From your description of 'em they must be a fine lot. Do they stand his 'cussing'?" asked Mr. Woodbury.

"I am sorry to say," replied Knox, "that his oaths have a great power over them. 'Tis all that makes them obey." *

"What a pity!" exclaimed the Ancient. "I was in hopes that he might have reformed." Then after shaking his head a moment, "but tell me, cap," he continued, "did I understand you to say that the left wing of the army ends here?"

"Yes, but there are a few scattered troops still further to the left. At Charlestown Neck, the strip of sand leading to Bunker Hill, we have a picket guard; also one at Penny ferry; and away off at Chelsea there are three companies. So you see Boston is pretty well hemmed in, and if we only had a few armed vessels to cut off supplies from England, we'd make the enemy surrender afore harvest time."

"Well, those you will soon have," spoke Jane, with a sudden glow on her cheeks. "Bob Broughton of Marblehead won't stay idle in these stirring times."

"I share your hopes," returned Knox, who, if such a thing were possible, now felt for the girl a love and an admiration warmer and deeper than ever before.

"Oh, what might we not do, if we had a navy and

* After the war Putnam made a sincere confession of his profanity before the church of which he was a member. Lossing I, p. 547.

a real army instead of this horde of men ! But I can't believe that the present disordered state of the troops will continue. As soon as the Continental Congress takes the matter in hand, we shall have a change for the better. Now each colony has absolute control over its own volunteers, and 'tis only by common consent that General Ward is looked up to as Commander-in-chief."

Having thus given his friends a pretty good idea of how the army was distributed, Knox helped Mr. Woodbury to descend the redoubt, then with Jane close by his side, proceeded at a leisurely gait towards Charlestown Neck. He would rather have taken them to Roxbury, where they might have enjoyed a chat with Nathaniel Greene, but Mrs. M'Neil, who was beginning to complain of headache, declared that she could not go so far.

While they were walking along, he drew Jane M'Crea a little apart, then in a low voice and with throbbing heart asked if she had any news of David.

"None," she replied, "and dreadful thoughts sometimes come over me—a presentiment of evil which I can hardly struggle against. But since I called on the Lord I have felt a singular calm of spirit ; I believe He has sent a guardian angel to me." Then looking full at Knox, "But tell me do you think that anything can have happened to David ? Speak a few comforting words, do."

It was hard for the young man to conceal his emotion as she made this appeal to him. "How she leans upon me !" he murmured. "What an honor to be thought a friend and comforter by such a pure, guileless soul !"

Then pressing her hand, "well, Jenny," he said, "if I were a wizard, how quickly would I bring David to you ! But I am not a wizard, and so you must have patience. As for his being the one soldier killed at Ticonderoga, why the chances of it are very few ; the garrison must have been large, and besides he may have gone to Crown Point, another fort near by. So

you must not let anxiety keep the roses from your cheeks; let me see you smile, let me hear your laugh once more."

As he spoke she did smile and looked so sweetly at him that Mr. Woodbury rubbed his hands and smiled too, for he felt sure that a match was being made between the young couple.

"You can always make me see blue sky," said Jane; "oh, Aaron, what an excellent guardian you are! Pray God, nothing may happen to you! You must live to comfort me and guard me until David returns."

Poor Aaron! can we wonder at the crimson on his brow, as he gazed into her soft blue eyes, and heard these words, so full of affection and trust? Can we wonder either, at the sigh which presently escaped him.

Just here, Mrs. M'Neil complained that her headache had grown so much worse that she could proceed no farther.

"I am sorry to spoil your day, Jenny," she said, "but really I am not well; let us go home."

Without a murmur, the girl at once turned around, and with her arm now slipped through Knox's, sauntered back to the spot where they had left the horse and wagon, while Mr. Smith hastened to get some drinking water for his beloved.

They had almost reached the shed, when they met Israel Putnam, who greeted them in his usual bluff way, slapping the Ancient on the back, then declaring that the Almighty had made a wonderful mistake in creating Jane a woman.

"Yes," he exclaimed, "you ought to have been a man. You're wanted here and not in Lexington, to set the lads a good example. Why, ten of my scamps have gone a clamming and my orderly sergeant is drunk. A fine army this to win Independence!"

Then lowering his voice a little, "and what's more I'd have you for General, in place of Artemus Ward. Now don't blush at what I say; I've heard all about you."

"Aye, she's as good as a regiment," put in Mr. Woodbury.

"Oh look, Colonel Putnam, who are those fellows?" exclaimed the girl, who was determined to interrupt this shower of praise. "Who can they be?"

"Why, they must be the troops from the South," said Putnam. "I heard they were coming."

"Well they have travelled fast," observed Knox. "'Tis but little more than a month since the first gun was fired."

"God bless them," said Jane, "they'll fight well; I can tell that by their skin and bones and elastic step. And how tanned they are!"

While they were making these observations the first band of strangers marched silently past without drum or fife, and a more determined looking set would have been hard to find anywhere and Mrs M'Neil declared that they all had the devil in their eyes.

They were dressed in blue coats, on the front of their caps were silver crescents, while the flag which they carried likewise had a half moon in its dexter corner.*

"Where from, Colonel?" inquired Mr. Woodbury of the one who appeared to act as chief.

"South Carolina, sir," was the response.

"But, dear me! look at those others yonder," exclaimed the widow, pointing to a second band. "Every chap as tall as a steeple!"

"Oh, I know where they are from," said Putnam. "From Virginia, sure! no doubt about it; I recognize their leader, knew him in the French war, name is Dan Morgan."

Then raising his voice, "how are you, Morgan?" he cried.

"Why, Put, how be you?" returned the one whom he addressed, a powerfully built man, who stood six feet in his moccasins. "I'm going to camp at Roxbury; come and see me there."

* The first American flag displayed in the South. Moultrie's Memoirs.

"Humph! you'd not catch me visiting the like of him," said Mrs. M'Neil, "what a villanous crowd! The first lot were elegant in blue uniforms, but these are ugly as 'Injins.' Look at their scalping knives! and the rattlesnake on their flag, ugh!"

"Well, they have 'Liberty or Death' embroidered on their deerskin coats," remarked Jane M'Crea; "and you know that is the watchword of Patrick Henry; they must be brave."

"But why couldn't they have put a pine tree on their flag, or anything they pleased except a snake?" rejoined the dame.

"Because 'twould not have accorded so well with the motto 'Don't tread on me,' which is just beneath the figure of the reptile."

Scarcely had she made this response, when she started and whispered, "Aaron, did you notice the last man's face? I caught but a glimpse of it, for he turned it hurriedly away, can it be he?"

"Who?" inquired her guardian. "You know nobody in Virginia."

"True. But I have a sharp eye; is it possible? can I have been mistaken? No, no, I'm sure 'twas Harry."

"Harry!" exclaimed Knox. Then dropping his voice "why, how could he be with Morgan? You are dreaming."

"Dreaming! Ah—yes—I did have a dream," murmured Jane, her face growing paler.

"Oh come, do not give way to dark forebodings," pursued Knox. "It could not have been your brother whom you saw. Oh, drive the shadow from your face; be cheerful, do."

"I will," said the girl, presently looking on him with a countenance no longer agitated, yet sternly sad and as that of one who is resigned to fate. "The Almighty has me in his power; he knows what is coming to David and myself. His will be done!"

"Yes," said Aaron, "His will be done in all things. So, Jenny, cheer up; I promise that I'll dance at your

wedding ; and I'll buy a farm next to yours and we'll all be happy together."

"Together—never," murmured Jane, and as she shook her head he wondered what could have made her so unlike her former self ; David's absence was hardly enough to account for the change. What was this dream she had mentioned ? And now, as once Josiah Woodbury had done, he asked her to repeat it. But she told him she would rather not ; then with her eyes searching deep into his eyes, "Oh, faithful friend," she said, "I wish you could be always near me ; with you I feel safe. But you must remain here and serve your country, and I, alas, must depart."

"Yes, yes," exclaimed Mrs. M'Neil, who with the Ancient was already seated in the wagon, and whose sharp ears had caught her last words, "squeeze his hand, child, and say good-by. I don't feel at all well ; Do let us hurry home."

"Good-by," said Jane, "best of friends, God bless you."

"And may He bless you," returned Aaron. Then dropping her hand he turned abruptly away, while his countenance, which a moment before had been so calm and cheerful, became stamped with a melancholy which it was well the young woman did not see.

"Resigned ?" he groaned, as the wagon drove off, "Resigned ? Oh, never, never ! The Ancient has his Phebe ; she is his betrothed, and he will take up the broken thread of his happiness in Immortality : but Jane M'Crea is not my Phebe."

CHAPTER XIII.

AS soon as Mrs. M'Neil got home she took to her bed, and for ten days was not able to leave it. Indeed so ill did she at one time become, that Jane M'Crea had serious thoughts of summoning Billy Smith, who would never forgive her if the good woman were allowed to die without bidding him farewell.

But Mr. Woodbury, who had seen many sick persons during his long life, agreed with the doctor that the patient, although hard pressed, would weather the storm; so she merely wrote to him to say that the fever was diminishing, and that he must make use of the quills and elderberry ink, which his "adored" had given him, and cheer her convalescence by a volley of epistles.

But the very day that Jane sent the letter off, she received one from Knox, in which, after urging her to keep up her spirits, and employ herself as much as possible, out of doors, where the fresh air and sunshine would be apt to drive away gloomy thoughts, he went on to reveal that Smith himself had been under the weather since her visit to camp.

"I have little doubt," he said, "what has laid him on his back, for he solemnly declares with his hand on the Bible, that he will never again taste a mouthful of honey. Yet the poor fellow wants me to write for some more. 'Twill show my beloved'—these are his own words—"that I appreciate the fruit of her bee-hives, and tell her, too, that the elderberry ink was a most welcome gift; though 'tween us, cap. 'twas the meanest trick I ever had played on me. And please wind up by assuring her that I would write, only that I am on picket duty.' But, dear Jenny, as the most pious fib is against your honest nature, you had better inform the dame of the truth, namely, that her lover has been unwell for the past week and unable to write; though you need not go into the particulars of his ailment, which is nothing else than gluttony. I wish I could say that he is the only one on the sick list from the same cause; but alas! the army is being ruined by petting. Every day the camp is over-run with women bringing pies and tarts and sweetmeats to make us discontented with our rations, and if ever we are reduced to pork and biscuit, I fear there will be a mutiny."

But Knox did not mention, as Jane hoped he would, a word about Morgan's band, and the soldier

whom she had taken for her brother. And this, instead of calming her anxiety, on the contrary presented itself to her mind as something ominous; for she knew him too well to believe that he could so soon have forgotten the circumstance.

"He has heard something and is afraid to tell me," she sighed, as she folded the letter up, then took her seat by the window. Presently her eyes rested on Mr. Woodbury, who was planting corn in the field beyond the orchard.

"Brave old man," she said, as she watched him. "Hot as it is, you don't shirk labor. And Phebe is always hovering near you. Oh, happy old man! Troubled with no doubts, no uncertainty, your future is as clear as the day."

At length her eyes wandered from the Ancient to the stone which she had put on the burial-place of the broken mirror; but scarcely had they rested upon it, when she drew back with a cry of horror. "And yet what a fool I am!" she said, quickly recovering her self-possession. "The least thing affects me now; as Mr. Woodbury declares, I am not what I used to be. But I cannot help it; I cannot break and bury my presentiment as I broke and buried the mysterious glass. Oh, would that I could! Deep in my soul 'tis smouldering like a half-dead fire, ready at any moment to break out. Prayer, earnest prayer, keeps it at bay; I try to be resigned, but nature is weak, and I cannot be what I used to be. Still that snake shall not frighten me."

Here she again looked down upon the adder, which lay coiled on top of the stone, and while she was looking, the reptile lifted up its loathsome head and hissed.

Just then a young man, with a fur cap drawn down over his face, rushed into the garden, calling her name.

"Jane! Jane!" he said, "where are you?"

"Here," she cried, almost fainting at the apparition. Then with a desperate effort to calm herself, she turned to David's picture and in faltering accents, "speak,

“speak,” she groaned, “is he come to tell me that you are dead? Oh, horrible uncertainty! But here he comes with the truth!” and as the words were echoing through the room, footsteps were rushing up the staircase. In another moment the door flew open, and Harry stood before her!”

For almost a minute brother and sister gazed at each other as if petrified, and on their faces was an expression which pen cannot describe.

Then falling on his knees and in a voice which seemed to come from his very soul, the youth spoke: “I am a murderer,” he said, “can you ever forgive me?”

As though she did not hear him, Jane still remained mute, her face was like the face of a statue, her eyes were riveted upon his eyes, with a cold, death-like stare. At length life seemed to return, her lip quivered, her bosom heaved, and oh, what thoughts rushed upon her!

The remorse-stricken being at her feet was her brother, her only brother; could she reject his despairing appeal? could she turn a deaf ear to his supplication, even though his hands were stained in the blood of her betrothed? No, no, she could not. Then bending down and taking his hand in hers, while the anguish of her heart broke out in scalding tears, “oh, yes, I forgive you,” she said, “I do, I do!”

But her gentle voice, instead of soothing, seemed to torture him into greater agony. “Back! back!” he cried, “do not touch me, I am not worthy ever again of your love. You have forgiven me indeed, but I cannot forgive myself.”

“But I will love you; you cannot prevent it; do not deepen my wound by driving me from you; here, take this pledge of my forgiveness,” then before he could spring aside, she threw her arms around his neck and kissed him.

Harry had risen to his feet; his head was resting on Jane’s shoulder, the silence of the room was broken only by their sobs, when the door opened and Josiah Woodbury strode in.

"Oh, Harry," he said, "I heard you calling Jenny. I knew 'twas you, and I've been coming as fast as I could. But—but—dear me !—In Heaven's name what has happened?"

"I have lost David—my betrothed," replied Jane, looking at him with such an air of woe that the old man was struck dumb and could not utter another word for several minutes.

Then advancing nearer, "well, never mind," he said, "never mind, as I shall meet Phebe again, so will you meet David. Life is short and with faith in immortality the misfortunes of this world fade into trifles. Come with me, by and by, to the rock in the woods; the rosebush is in full bloom and you can take a slip of it to plant over your betrothed." With this he turned and left the room, evidently more deeply moved than he had been in many a year; and as he sauntered back to the corn-field he wiped more than one tear away.

"Oh how mistaken I was!" he said. "True, when she showed me David's portrait a few weeks ago, I might have guessed that 'twas he she loved best. But I could not believe she would ever give her heart to one who had joined the British. Yet he was an excellent youth, and many's the stone wall he has helped me climb over; he didn't think less of me for being old and broken down."

Then as he resumed his work he tried to discover the reason why Jane had kept her engagement a secret.

"Perhaps," he said, "she feared that I'd not like her to marry one who was fighting against us. Well, neither I should: Aaron Knox was my choice. Nevertheless, David had many good qualities and in the township there was nobody so handsome."

While he was thus soliloquizing, Harry M'Crea was already on his way back to camp. He had refused to remain till evening, hard as his sister had urged him to, nor would he even promise to visit the camp of the Second Massachusetts regiment, where he might see Knox: "You have forgiven me," he said, "and that is

enough ; henceforth I would rather hold aloof from all my friends, especially Aaron."

And so he went off, while Jane, bravely hiding her grief, resumed her place at the bedside of Mrs. M'Neil, to whom she did not impart the sad news; for David had been a great pet of the widow's, and she feared that to tell her of his death might do harm while the fever was still upon her.

But, oh, it was a trial for the girl to remain with the sick woman and hear her often talking about the youth.

"The boy is a long time gone," she would mutter, "what keeps him?" Then pointing to the wall, "Ah, there he is!" she would cry out. "He has come back from Boston, look!" and the smile which lit up the delirious woman's face at these moments, was a ghostly smile for Jane.

CHAPTER XIV.

ON the evening of June the eleventh, Count von Meyer found himself again in Helen Jones' apartment, and this time alone with her, the Indian woman having been sent on an errand to a distant part of the town. Before Nanny left she had been told not to feel uneasy if her young mistress were not at home on her return, as the girl was invited to pass the night and following day with the family of one of the officers attached to Lord Percy's staff.

"No news yet of your brother," began the count, after taking a chair opposite Helen, and speaking in a cheerful, off-hand way. "But you will hear from him within a fortnight, depend on it. So be not uneasy: I never yet undertook a thing and failed."

"I hope with all my heart, that your kind efforts will meet with success," returned Helen, endeavoring to look him in the face, yet instinctively her eyes shunned his eyes, for there was something about them which terrified her. "But I cannot deny that I am

growing more and more anxious. I expected to find him here when I arrived; if he went to Ticonderoga my worst fears may prove true."

"Not a bit of it, no such thing," exclaimed the other in a positive tone. "I tell you he is alive and before very long I shall have the great pleasure of seeing him on Lord Howe's staff: Lord Howe, you must know, has arrived."

"Indeed? well, that is good news; when did he come?"

"About two hours ago, in the frigate *Cerberus*, accompanied by General Clinton and General Burgoyne. And the reinforcements have also arrived, so that Boston will now wear quite a different appearance. In fact, everybody I have met, except yourself, is in high spirits, for they all expect a speedy settlement of these troubles. Indeed, so confident is one of the Generals that peace is close at hand, that he has brought over his fishing tackle and asked me if I knew of any trout streams in the neighborhood."

"Do you share those bright hopes, sir?"

"I do not," answered the count, with a sardonic smile. "What I witnessed on the nineteenth of April, convinced me that the rebels are anything but poltroons. If they lack discipline, experience will give it to them, while the earth-works, which day by day are encircling the city, prove that they are in downright earnest. Aye, they are using pick and spade like beavers, and I cannot, for the life of me, understand how General Gage can keep writing to the king such hopeful dispatches." Then after twirling his moustache a moment; "but now," he continued, "let us proceed to business; are you ready?"

"I am," answered Helen, her heart beating with excitement as the time approached to set out on her bold undertaking. "Do you not see by my attire that I am ready?"

"Aye, to be sure; quite a country lass air," rejoined the count, as he surveyed her, "and a very pretty lass too. Yet, in spite of your calico gown and apron a

practiced eye could tell what you really are. How impossible it is to hide the born lady! Would that your complexion were less fair! That you had at least one freckle! But never mind; the worst that may happen is that some American will fall in love with you. Ha! ha!"

Then while she was still blushing, he drew from his pocket a letter which he bade her read. "'Twill show you," he said, "that you are advancing your brother's interests as well as doing me a favor in setting out on this trip to Lexington."

"Oh, I thank you ever so much," said Helen, when she had perused it. "This promise of a position on his staff makes the matter a certainty. I am glad, too, that you waited until Lord Howe came, for I would rather have David with him than with General Gage, who is slow and might not afford my brother the same chances to smell powder and win promotion. I agree with you, this war is not going to end in one campaign, and I am ambitious and for David's sake would like a dozen campaigns!"

"I accept your thanks with joy," continued the count; "but remember, you are doing for me as much as I can ever do for you. Believe me, 'tis I who should feel grateful. But as night is approaching let me give you now my last instructions. In the first place you will cross the lines at Roxbury, which is the same way you took to come here. From Roxbury you will proceed to Lexington, a village about thirteen miles distant—and here is a small map, showing the road. At Lexington, which you ought to reach by dawn, you will go to Buckman's tavern, and ask for refreshment, and a bed, too, if you like; in fact act as if you were a tired traveller journeying home from a visit to your sweetheart in the American camp; or if you prefer, you may make believe that you have been a servant in a tory family here, and that they have discharged you for your rebel sympathies. Then when you are rested begin your work. Remember, the young woman about whom I want information has exceedingly long black

hair, a nose anything but Roman, and a pert, saucy face, and that on the nineteenth of April, she was with a very old man watching our troops as they marched through the village. Bearing these facts in mind, use well your eyes and ears ; try and find out who she is, and if you can, pay her a visit. Tell her that the officer who spoke to her in April, and who gave her a rosebud, is Count Otto von Meyer, a wealthy noble, who now holds a position on General Gage's staff. Say to her, too, that she has completely won my heart, and that if she will consent to return my amour she shall never regret it. Then present her with this rose, and beg her to name a place where I may have an interview with her."

"Surely, she will not refuse such a request," said Helen.

"I am not so confident of that. Unless I am much mistaken you will find her a thorough American, full of enthusiasm for Independence, and wealth and rank may seem nothing in her eyes."

"Then, sir, she must indeed be no ordinary person."

"True, she is not of the common herd, whatever her lineage may be. I have in my lifetime seen many a bewitching woman, but there is I know not what about this wild-flower of America, which throws in the shade all the nymphs I have ever met in the old world. And—" here he dropped his voice so that Helen did not catch the rest of the sentence—"I will pursue her until I have her ; nothing shall stop me."

The count now produced a carpet-bag, which he said she must take with her. It contained a Bay psalm book, a copy of the Song of Liberty, some knitting needles and a portrait of Joseph Warren, who he informed Helen was considered a great man by the rebels.

"The contents of this bag," he added, may prove useful in case you are stopped by any over-suspicious Yankee ; the fellow will see at once that you are not a tory."

Having thus given her all the instructions which

she might require, Count von Meyer rose, and followed by his young protégé, went down to the street, where at a brisk walk they proceeded to the west side of the town, and before long were at the strip of land which led over to Roxbury.

Here they halted. "Thus far," said the officer, "all has gone well, thanks to the countersign; let us hope that the darkness will favor you the rest of the way. To-morrow at the same hour I will be waiting for you here, to conduct you back through our chain of sentries. Beyond this point you must rely on your own shrewdness. If by any chance you find yourself close upon one of the enemy, do not attempt to avoid him, but walk boldly up and exclaim, "Thank the Lord, I have escaped from the Tories!"

With this he shook Helen's hand, then having reminded her once more that she was working for her brother's interests and urged her to try and reach Lexington by sunrise, he bade her God speed.

It was a dark night, but she had studied well the route and so without anything more serious happening to her than getting her feet wet as she crossed Muddy creek, she found herself at about four in the morning on the porch of Buckman's tavern.

Nobody had ever before been obliged to knock more than once at this place of public entertainment without gaining admittance. But Helen Jones knocked four times, and was beginning to think that the house was deserted, when an old woman timidly opened the door and asked what she wanted.

"Some refreshments," replied Helen.

"Humph! on your way to camp, I suppose, to see your sweetheart? lots of gals in your fix: can't stay at home without the boys." Then looking down at Helen's skirts and shaking her head, "And you've been travelling all night, too, and no doubt want sleep as well as 'wittels.'"

"I have indeed been on my feet the whole night," pursued Helen, "but am not, as you suppose, going to camp to visit a lover: I am a refugee who has been

driven out from Boston. The Tory family with whom I lived, discharged me on account of my American sympathies and I had to leave the city."

"Oh, indeed! Then you are right welcome to Buckman's tavern," exclaimed the other, now opening wide the door. "Come in."

With this, Helen was ushered through the bar-room into the cosy little apartment next to it, where, having taken off her hood, she threw herself upon the sofa, and began to watch the dame set the table, at the same time she gathered up her thoughts and went over in her mind all that Count von Meyer had told her, so that when the proper moment arrived she might commence to ask questions.

"Oh, won't I be glad," said the crone, after bustling about a few minutes, "when Mrs. M'Neil is able to do without nursing! Mrs. M'Neil, you must know, keeps this tavern. But some weeks ago she was off to camp visitin' her beau—for she's got one just as well as younger gals; there's a fish for every clam, as folks say—she was took with a sunstroke and came mighty nigh making this property change hands. But she's growing better now, thank the Lord!"

"No doubt you are worn out nursing her," remarked Helen, unconsciously saying the very thing which would lead to the discovery of all she wanted to know.

"Well, not quite; this is only my second night up. There's a young woman living here, that's kind of adopted by the widow, who has no children of her own, and she has nursed her better than a dozen like me could. But she went off a couple of days ago to Concord for a little holiday, and I've taken her place. Good Jane M'Crea! what a 'critter' she is! I'd be dead afore this if I had sat up as many nights as she has; but she's only one in a thousand. And yet, 'tisn't her splendid, long black hair which reaches almost to her heels, and which drives the men folk wild, that I think so much of—no indeed, but it's her good will and charity to the poor; why, what would Josiah Woodbury who is a hundred years old, do without her, I'd like to

know? He'd 'ave been under ground afore this. And then, too, she's as brave as she's good, and when the redcoats passed through here in April, she faced 'em like a man and got wounded. Why call her the Pride of Lexington: that name isn't half good enough."

"I should be very glad to make Miss M'Crea's acquaintance," said Helen; "I'm sorry she is away."

"Aye, and I'm sure she'd be right glad to know you, for you've been made to suffer for your opinions, and Jenny is a great American."

"Well, since I cannot see her, perhaps I might speak a few words with Mrs. M'Neil? Tell her there is a young woman just arrived from Boston, who wants to speak with her on some business!"

"Aye, to be sure I will. But if it's employment you're seeking, there isn't any hope of it, there's not work enough to keep two gals busy. However I'll ask the widow if you can come up to her room."

"With this, the crone disappeared up the stair-case, leaving Helen still reclining on the sofa, 'very much fatigued by her long night walk, yet too excited by the success which had thus far attended her expedition even to close her eyes.

In a few minutes the old woman returned with Mrs. M'Neil's answer, which was, by all means to pay her a visit as soon as she had refreshed herself. Accordingly, when Helen had done justice to the bread and butter, and cold roast beef, spread out upon the table, she followed the dame to the large south room on the upper story, where the mistress of the house, propped up in bed, was anxiously awaiting her.

The instant she crossed the threshold the sick woman clasped her hands and opened her eyes so wide, that the nurse was astonished, and wondered if the fever could have suddenly returned. But presently her astonishment was succeeded by a feeling of the deepest curiosity, when she saw the patient put her finger to her lips.

"Don't mention any names," whispered Mrs. M'Neil, when Helen had reached the bedside. "These

are dangerous times, and 'twon't do to be suspected. But you can't tell how glad I am to meet you ! Dreadful sorry the girl isn't at home ; gone off on a holiday. But she often thinks of the one who has sent you here ; she'll never forget him."

Here the patient turned to the nurse and frowned, for the latter had glided close up to the head of the bed, and was evidently trying to catch what she was saying.

"Then you know all about it?" said Helen, little dreaming that the widow (who had perceived at a glance her resemblance to her brother) was alluding to David ; for the youth had often told her that he had a twin sister, while the Ancient, true to the promise he had given Jane M'Crea, had not breathed to anybody a word about her meeting with the Hessian officer on the nineteenth of April.

"Know all about it? Of course I do ! She never keeps any secrets from me ; and though I'm not on the same side as the one who has sent you, I don't consider every soldier fighting against us a devil."

"Mrs. M'Neil, I do wish you'd quit talking, or you'll have the fever back," interrupted the nurse, leaning over the pillow. "Secrets is always exciting and I've 'heerd' enough already to last me a year. Do let the gal be off. What can't be spoke aloud, oughtn't to be spoke at all ; so please quit buzzing."

"Mary Godwin, I just wish you'd leave the room," exclaimed Mrs. M'Neil, darting on her a terrible squint. "I'm well enough to-day to take care of myself. It's downright mean to hang around listening. But if you repeat anything you've heard—look out !"

"Well, I'll just stay where I be," rejoined the other with a provoking grin. "Jane M'Crea bade me watch by you and I'm going to obey her."

After this sharp sally between the pair, whose tongues were pretty evenly matched, Helen opened the bag, and took from it the rose which the count had brought to her the evening before, then handing it to the widow, "this flower," she whispered, "he

sends as a token of his love; 'tis not the first he has given her. On the nineteenth of April 'twas only a bud he placed in her hands, now 'tis a full blown rose."

"Ah, I guessed he was with the British troops that day. What a pity such loving hearts should be on opposite sides!"

"And he wants her to name a time and a place where he may meet her," continued Helen.

"Well let him come day after to-morrow to the knoll where the seven pines stand; although not far from the house, 'tis a retired spot and he'll not be apt to be discovered. Still, he must be disguised, for this old fidget who I am afraid has already heard more than is prudent, or some other sneak, might see him, and if he had on his uniform, folks would say strange things about the gal. And do you be sure and come too."

Here the interview was brought to a rather sudden termination by the entrance of the doctor.

"Now you had better leave," whispered Mrs. M'Neil, giving Helen a kiss, "but don't forget day after to-morrow on the pine knoll."

"No, I'll not forget; and I'll come too," and as the girl went out of the room she thought what a dear good soul the widow was, and regretted that she had not had a chance to question her about David. "She may, perhaps, have known him," she said, "at a public house like this many persons must pass under her eye and she may know, too, the youth who journeyed with me through the wilderness. True, Brown is a common name; but I could describe him well, for he was so handsome, and I am sure there are few like him. Oh, how quickly he might set my fears at rest! He must have seen the body of the English soldier, who was killed at Ticonderoga, and by telling me his general appearance, I could know if 'twas David. But day after to-morrow will soon come, and then I'll ask her a thousand questions."

On returning to the parlor below, Helen again threw herself upon the sofa, for she wanted very much to get a little sleep before setting out on her way back to

Boston. And sleep soon came ; the stillness of the house favored it, and when in a quarter of an hour Doctor Lilly passed through the room, she was in the land of dreams. It was noon when she awoke ever so much refreshed, and rejoiced to find the table spread with numberless good things, which had been prepared expressly for her benefit.

"Has Miss M'Crea returned?" were the first words she addressed to the crone who was bustling about the room.

"No ; hardly guess she'll come to-day," was the answer, spoken in a rather cross tone.

"Well, you don't mean to say that sumptuous dinner is all for me?"

"All for you, and there's some secret at the bottom of it ; come now, be a good girl and tell what it is."

"A secret ! I do not understand you," said Helen, sitting up and laughing.

"Oh sha ! yes you do. But never mind ; I don't begrudge the trouble I've taken, and I'm glad the widow gave me orders to prepare this feast ; 'don't stint the gal in anything,' she said, as soon as I reported to her that you hadn't left the house. 'Let her sleep as long as possible and when she wakes up treat her to the best my larder can afford.'"

"What a kind person she is !" returned Helen ; "I must see her again before I go, and thank her for her hospitality."

"No, that's out of the question," said the other, sharply ; "the doctor has put his foot down, and ordered me not to let you excite her with any more buzzings."

Perceiving that she was in earnest, Helen did not insist upon it, but taking a seat at the table devoted the next half hour to satisfying her appetite, and when she was finished she took another nap, not so long as the first, but full long enough to restore to her all her strength, so that when the clock struck four she was quite ready to depart.

Her trip back to Boston was not marked by any-

thing worth recording. The greater part of the way she rode in a farmer's wagon, which brought her at such an early hour to the vicinity of Roxbury that she had an excellent opportunity to examine the redoubt which General Thomas had built there; then when night came and the soldiers had returned to their tents, she directed her steps to Roxbury Neck, where, thanks to the sleepy sentinels, she passed the British lines unchallenged.

We need not say that the Count von Meyer, who was waiting for her at the appointed spot, was delighted to meet her.

"I have succeeded," said Helen, "beyond my expectations, for you must confess 'twas no easy task you gave me."

"True, but your brother will bless you for what you have done," returned the count, as he accompanied her to her lodgings, his heart throbbing with evil passion.

"But let us not talk about it now; even at this hour curious ears may be listening to us: wait until we reach the house."

When he had almost reached it a brother officer stopped him, to talk about a great ball which was to be given the following evening in honor of the newly arrived generals; but although he stood ten minutes, apparently listening with interest to what his friend was saying, he was inwardly cursing him, and when at length the latter drew his finger out of his button-hole, he hastened after Helen without so much as bidding him good-night.

On reaching the girl's apartment he found her seated at her desk writing. "I am doing my work soldier fashion," she said with a smile. "But now I am through and if you like I shall read you my report—it isn't long."

"Were it whole chapters," exclaimed the count, leaning over her shoulder, while his eyes glowed with a singular brightness, "I would listen to it: begin! begin!" Then dropping his voice and gazing round the room, "but where is Nanny?"

"Oh, no danger; I have sent her off to bed."

"Good! Then begin."

Accordingly, Helen proceeded to read the account of her expedition to Lexington, giving almost word for word her conversation, with the crone of the Ordinary, as well as all that Mrs. M'Neil had said about Jane M'Crea; and when she had finished and told him to dismiss all doubt about possessing himself before long of the fair young American, there broke from him such a wild laugh that she turned and gazed at him in terror.

"Oh, go on! I am drinking nectar from your lips," he cried, "She is mine! Go on!"

"And I have helped you win her," said Helen, in a voice which made the other frown, for there was a tremor in it.

"Aye, you have helped me weave the web; 'tis Fate!"

"Fate!" she murmured, as for the first time a doubt entered her mind about the true character of her patron. But it staid only a moment, for presently he went on to repeat all that he was going to do for David and this thought chased the dark suspicion away, and when presently he asked her to let him keep the report, she handed it to him in the most confiding manner; "'Twill remind you," she said, "of my services; you see I am not a bad draughtsman."

"No, indeed!" he exclaimed, as he ran his eye over the crayon sketch of one of the forts near Roxbury, which she had made at the foot of it. "If your brother has your talent, General Howe cannot do too much for him." Then folding the paper up and thrusting it in his pocket, "day after to-morrow!" he said, "day after to-morrow! Oh happy nineteenth of April! Jane M'Crea was wise not to show me then her real sentiments; it might have brought us both into trouble. But day after to-morrow—" here he dropped his voice and Helen did not catch the rest of the sentence.

"And I am to accompany you," she said, "oh, how pleasant it will be!"

"No, impossible," returned the count. "I shall have to go disguised; you cannot come."

So decided was his tone that Helen made no resistance. But presently a sweet smile broke out on his lips, and taking her hand, "remember," he said, "to obey me is to serve your brother, so do not think that I am harsh or unreasonable: Time will show you what I am."

These were his last words before he bade her good night, and as she heard them, all her kindly feeling and confidence returned, and she willingly allowed him to press his lips to her hand.

But when, in another moment, he disappeared and she found herself alone in her chamber, there came over her a sense of uneasiness which she found it impossible to drive away.

The words, "she is mine; it is fate," rang in her ears; they had in them something ominous, and she withdrew to her couch with a foreboding that all might not end as brightly as she had hoped.

CHAPTER XV.

AFTER what seemed an age to Mrs. M'Neil, Jane M'Crea returned from Concord, and as she entered the widow's room, she greeted the latter so cheerily that few would have suspected that there was any grief in her heart.

"Oh, Jenny, how glad I am to have you back," said the sick woman, rising from her pillow; "you mustn't take any more holidays. Your voice sounds so sweet; I have no doubt you have had a pleasant time, but I can't spare you. Besides, you lost more than you gained by going away. There came a messenger here with news which will bring back the roses to your cheeks at once: oh, what do you think? Get ready now to feel happier than you have ever felt in all your life."

Then placing her hands on the girl's shoulder she

gazed earnestly at her, as if to observe what effect her words might produce.

"Alas! if you knew what I know, you would not say that," returned Jane, the tears starting to her eyes. "Yet, if Aaron Knox has done some brave act and been promoted—if he has obtained any high reward, of course I shall rejoice; nobody takes more pride in him than I. But—" Here her voice broke down and the tears flowed faster, and the widow, if she could have done two things at once, would have cried too; but instead of crying she began to laugh.

"Oh, child, child, what ails you?" she continued: "get ready to clap your hands and sing. 'Tisn't about Knox I'm going to tell, but about—David! who is in Boston, and who yesterday sent his twin sister here—that sister whom he used to talk so much of—with a beautiful rose, which you will find placed above his portrait, instead of the withered apple blossoms which I made Mary Godwin throw out of the window."

At these words Jane started. "You bewilder me! Am I in my senses?" she exclaimed, pressing her hands to her forehead.

The widow, smothering her laughter and a little puzzled by the girl's emotion, now went on to relate the circumstance of Helen Jones' visit and the conversation with her at the bedside: "But we spoke in whispers," she said, "and did not mention a single name, so although the nurse listened, I don't believe she heard much."

Still Jane's hands remained clasping her brow, she was too dumbfounded to utter a syllable.

But when Mrs. M'Neil, who had carefully treasured up all that Helen had told her, went on to say, "'Tis not a bud such as he gave you the day he passed through here with the British troops, but a full blown rose, and to-morrow he is coming to meet you on the pine knoll," she trembled and turned whiter than the sheet, and the dame, grasping her hand, begged her to speak. "What has gone wrong? What have I done to terrify you?" she said; "are you mad or am I mad?"

surely 'twas David's sister who came yesterday with that flower, as a token that he had not forgotten his betrothed? Who else but he could have sent it? And what other girl could have been so like him but his twin sister?"

"Ah, who else could have sent it?" murmured Jane, as she turned away and rushed into her room: "who else? who else?"

Sure enough, there was the rose above the youth's portrait; but the blossoms—the sweet blossoms which Aaron had placed there, where were they?

"The hateful man is following me," she said, "But I will baffle him. I loathe even to touch what he has touched; but that flower cannot stay where it is—go!" and as she spoke she tore it from the wall and flung it out of the window. Then gazing down to see where it dropped, she found that she had thrown it on the very spot where she had once seen the adder; and while she was looking the reptile crawled slowly out of its hole beneath the stone and wound itself in a horrid coil about the rose.

"Fear not. The Lord will shield you from him," spoke Josiah Woodbury, who had entered unperceived, supporting Mrs. M'Neil on his arm.

"No, he shall not harm you," said the widow, her eyes filled with tears. "The Ancient has told me all about him, and he has told me, too, about poor David. Oh, little did I dream that he was killed!"

Here she gave full flow to her grief. Jane wept, too, while Mr. Woodbury bowed his head in silence.

"God's will be done!" said the girl presently wiping away her tears. "I am not the only one who must lose her betrothed by this unhappy war."

"And you will meet David again," spoke the Ancient: "Immortality will complete what this world has left unfinished. So remain calm, do not give way to vague alarms."

"I will pray," murmured Jane.

"Well said," spoke the widow; "in spite of your love of fun and out door sports, you were ever a relig-

ious girl. And I ought to pray, too, for though I'm not superstitious there is something in this affair which worries me."

"And me, too," said Mr. Woodbury. "For you declare that the young woman who came from Boston was the very image of David. There is something dark and mysterious in it, and one might almost believe the evil spirit was at work against my Jenny. But he shan't harm her; no, no he shan't," and as the old man spoke, he pressed the trembling girl to his breast.

Suddenly, Jane clasped her hands and a radiant look spread over her face. "A happy thought has struck me," she exclaimed, "who knows! It may really be David's sister! In these troublesome times she may be anxious to find him; such a thing would not be unreasonable. And a kind Providence may have guided her here to comfort me and for me to comfort her."

"Well now, there's the riddle solved!" cried Mrs. M'Neil. "And when she comes to-morrow, do not let her go away. Keep her; she'll be all the happier with you."

"Yes, if it's David's sister, keep her by all means," added the Ancient; "and right glad shall I be to find there is no devil-work in this matter."

"You may be sure I will," said Jane. "Despite my horror of the man who is coming with her, I'll go to the pine knoll. I'll brave him for the sake of Helen Jones."

The rest of the day the girl passed with Mrs. M'Neil, telling her about her visit to Concord, where the widow had hosts of friends, and endeavoring by conversation to drive from her mind all thought of the Hessian. And so well did she succeed that when evening came round the dame declared that her presence was better than sunshine and her voice worth all the doctor's drugs.

"I never really knew you until now," she said; "this day has shown you to me in a brighter light. A careless eye might think nothing troubled you, that your heart was untouched by grief—the darkest, bitterest

grief that can afflict a maiden. And yet I'm sure David will never be forgotten ; your resignation and cheerfulness come from faith—you have not read your Bible for nothing."

"Oh no—never forgotten!" murmured Jane. "Ever my betrothed, ever, ever."

But calm as had been her waking hours, the night which followed this trying day was a very restless one for the young woman. She had a long dream in which she was pursued by a fiend whom she could not see, but whose voice kept calling out, "coming, coming, coming, you cannot escape." And when she opened her eyes and looked toward the window, and heard the dogs barking, she thought that the one of whom she had such a horror might be at that very moment prowling around the house.

"And yet," she said, as she rose at the call of the early robin, "the Lord holds me in his hands—I cannot be harmed except by His will, and so why should I fear?" Then approaching the window, she looked out on the horizon. "How beautiful the world is at this hour!" she said. "The last star has gone out—the sun is coming—the robin knows it—Oh how glorious it is! If David were only here 'twould be Paradise!"

"Yes it would, and you the prettiest angel in it," spoke a voice behind her, and looking round she found Mrs. M'Neil standing in the doorway.

"Now don't scold me," she continued "for getting up without your help; I'm almost well to-day, and 'twas worth a walk from my room to catch you like a half-feathered bird tumbled out of its nest watching for the first sunbeams. But now make haste and dress: remember who is coming to-day."

"Don't speak of it!" said Jane, the color which the breeze had given to her cheeks suddenly fading away.

"Well, if you say so, I won't; but before I go back to my room let me give you a piece of my mind. After you left me last evening I thought a great deal about you and this strange officer whom you dislike so in-

tensely, and I have come to the conclusion that you are unreasonable to have such a horror of him. Can it be because he is a Britisher?"

"Oh no," murmured Jane.

"Well then it must be for some reason more childish still, for you have only met him once and the worst thing he has done is to send you a rose, which I see you have thrown away. Now the truth is, you have been reading too much of that book of Cotton Mather's, which the Ancient prizes so highly: 'tis full of witch stories and the doings of evil spirits, and you've got a wild notion into your head which may drive you mad if you don't get rid of it. So take my advice, quit reading Wonders of the Invisible World, and go meet this stranger as you would meet any other man. Besides there is somebody coming with him whom surely you do not fear."

"Yes, true, and for her sake I am going to the knoll. But, Mrs. M'Neil, do you really think I ought not to read Doctor Mather's book? What is there in it more strange than we read of in the Bible?"

"Well, Jenny, I can't say there is anything more strange; and if I'd been within earshot of Balaam's ass when it spoke, I'd 'ave been awful scared. But you mustn't let those things bother you too much."

"Well, the Evil One followed our first parents out of the Garden of Eden: where is he now, Mrs. M'Neil? He must be somewhere—trying to inspire us with wicked thoughts, fighting our guardian angels, perhaps at times appearing in human form."

"All that may be true," rejoined the widow, "but still I never feel as if it was true after sunrise. Once in a while, when I wake up at night, I get scary; but Lord, I don't believe the Old Boy or any of his imps ever trouble us at this hour. We only see 'em when it's pitch dark."

With this sage remark the dame withdrew, shaking her head and muttering harsh things of old Cotton Mather.

When in about half an hour afterwards Jane de-

scended to the sitting-room, she found Mr. Woodbury already there, and from his expression when he greeted her, she knew that there was something on his mind.

"Ah!" said he, "the robin woke you no doubt, just as he woke me; nothing like early rising."

"No indeed!" returned Jane, her cheek flushing with feverish excitement as she went to the door and gazed out.

"I don't believe he is at the knoll yet," said the Ancient, who guessed what she was thinking about. "Time enough for us to go there after we've had our breakfast."

"But I must go alone," returned the young woman.

"Alone? well, Jenny, I don't know about that: it might not be prudent. Better let me accompany you, and when you have persuaded Helen Jones to stay with us, I'll tell the Hessian that the next time he shows his face here, we'll hang him as a spy."

"Well, I would much rather go by myself, indeed I would."

"Perhaps you fear that he might offer me violence?" continued the Ancient, guessing exactly the truth. "Well, well, have your own way; nothing frightens you." Here he resumed his walk up and down the room, and after pondering the matter over a few minutes, determined at any rate, to be within call, armed and ready for an emergency.

The morning repast was over, and the sun was full an hour high, when Jane M'Crea, without exchanging a word with the widow or Mr. Woodbury, passed out of the house and directed her steps toward the pine knoll. She walked briskly, and her anxious expression several times changed to one of joy at the thought of meeting the sister of her betrothed. "'Tis indeed a special Providence which has guided her to me," she said, as she approached the knoll: then halting when she reached the first tree, and with a look in which relief and disappointment were strangely blended, "but they have not come yet," she said. These last words were spoken aloud, then throwing aside her hood, she

was about to seat herself in a shady spot to wait for them, when she was startled by a deep and solemn voice which said, "I am here!"—At once the blood rushed to her heart, then while she was gazing around to see whence it came, from behind the largest of the trees glided the being whom she dreaded, and with his piercing eyes fixed upon her, "stay and listen to me," he continued, "I am alone."

"Alone!" she repeated, betraying too visibly the chill and terror which had seized her at his sudden apparition. Then clasping her hands, "Oh, Helen," she cried, "David's sister, where are you? Why did you not come?"

At these words, quick through the mind of the artful villain, who was exerting all his singular power to hold her fast to the spot where she stood, flashed a suspicion which caused his dark brow to grow darker and the glitter of his eyes to become more intense. Jane M'Crea then knew who Helen was! perhaps she had loved David Jones!

"I repeat, there is nobody with me," he continued, "nor would I have another near when you are by. I have come disguised as a pedler; yonder lies my pack, and I have run no small risk to visit you, fair angel." Then opening his arms, "approach," he said; "trust yourself to me; would I harm you?" Then after a moment's pause. "But you tremble! Ha! I see! 'Tis this dagger in my sleeve; I brought it for my protection; why should it frighten you?" For a moment Jane did not answer, and while he was staring at her there came over his face an expression hard to describe; it was as if another face more hideous than his own were gazing through it, as if other eyes were peering through his eyes.

Then summoning all her strength, "Wicked man, devil, leave me!" she cried.

"Devil!" he hissed. "Well, no, I will not begone. Nor can you escape me; sooner or later a dream which I once had shall come true. In the dream your fate

was revealed; listen and I will tell it to you." As he spoke he advanced a step nearer.

"No! begone! I will not hear it. God's will be done!" cried Jane, trembling, but unable to flee.

A wild laugh answered her, and yet nearer he came; His hungry fingers were almost upon her, when the loud report of a gun, followed by a savage cry, roused her from her fatal lethargy and turning round she staggered towards the Ancient, who was approaching. "I guess I hit him," said the latter, coming up just as she sank to the earth. "He had to drop his dagger and run, yes, there is blood near it." Then bending down and smoothing from her face her long, black hair, "But Jenny, what's the matter? Have you fainted? never knew you do it afore." Yes, for the first time in her life Jane M'Crea had fainted, and there was something almost ludicrous in the old man's astonishment. But in a few minutes her consciousness returned, and gazing around with a bewildered air, she murmured something which Mr. Woodbury did not understand.

"Oh, he has gone," said the latter, "nor is the villain likely to repeat his visit; I gave him a good lesson with this old blunderbuss."

"Thank God!" said Jane, slowly rising to her feet. "But what a coward I am! Mrs. M'Neil says I have changed very much. Oh, I am not what I used to be!"

"Well, I don't call it cowardly to be afraid of such a being," returned the Ancient. "I wonder at your daring to meet him alone. But now, take my arm and let us hurry back to the village; I want to send off word to camp about this affair; our soldiers may catch the wretch."

Accordingly, she took his arm and as fast as they could they left the hill. When they got about half way home they were met by Mrs. M'Neil, who seemed much excited.

"I have come," she said, "to tell you that Knox has arrived, and he is dreadful stunned by David's death. But I heard a gun a few minutes ago and saw a man

galloping off towards the high road ; what has happened ? ”

“ Ah then the villain will escape,” said Mr. Woodbury. “ I was in hopes he was afoot and that we might intercept his retreat.”

“ Yes, he'll escape sure,” continued the dame, “ for his nag cleared yonder stone wall like a deer. But now while we walk along do tell me all about it—for, Jenny, you are very pale, and I know it's something dreadful.”

In a few words the girl now related what had passed between herself and the stranger, and when she got through, the widow's face looked troubled. “ Child,” she said, “ you were right. A man that would seek to gratify his evil passions on an innocent being like you, must have a devil in him. But child I'll keep a bright look out in future, so do not fear.”

CHAPTER XVI.

THE meeting between Jane and Aaron was solemn and touching, and as they held each other's hand, it was easy to read on their countenances what their tongues refused to utter. The single word “ gone,” which the girl pronounced, after a silence of more than a minute, had in it a power greater than tears and lamentations.

“ I shall never have such another friend,” murmured Knox, “ never ! ”

“ But he has not left you,” spoke Mr. Woodbury. “ He has gone to the Immortals like my beloved Phebe : But she is often near me, invisible and infusing into my soul the blessed influence of her presence, and at this very moment, David is no doubt listening to what we say. Therefore, do not mourn. Our stay on earth may seem long and tedious when those whom we love have disappeared. But have patience ; there is more wisdom in joy than in sorrow, and as you grow old becomes more joyful, for years are not the mile-

stones of life ; what are grey hairs, with faith in Immortality?"

"Yes, yes, we shall meet again," said the young man.

"Oh, sweet, consoling faith!" murmured Jane. Then after a short pause, and in a voice too low for the Ancient or Mrs. M'Neil to hear: "But tell me, Aaron," she said, "why did not Harry come with you? I have forgiven him the cruel deed; why did he not come?"

At this, Knox started. "Alas!" he sighed, "'tis then as I feared; Harry has gone and burdened his conscience with a terrible load. Poor Harry!"

"Oh, but I have forgiven him."

"But he has not forgiven himself," said Knox. "I found him in Morgan's band, but he would hold no intercourse with me; he is like a person haunted by remorse."

"Well, since he will not come to me, I will go to him," said Jane, "and do all I can to bring back his peace of mind; he shall again hear me say that he is forgiven."

Here she was interrupted by Mrs. M'Neil, who, before she could prevent it, began telling Knox about Helen Jones, and how Jane had just come from the pine knoll where she had gone to meet her and a foreign officer, whose acquaintance she had made the day of the battle of Lexington.

While the dame was speaking, Jane watched with a feeling of uneasiness the countenance of her guardian, then when she got through—and Mrs. M'Neil did not stop until she had told everything—"oh, Aaron, good Aaron," she said, "do not blame me for having kept this a secret from you. The few words which this stranger addressed to me on the nineteenth of April showed that there was no virtue in his heart, and there was that about him which terrified me; no other human being has ever impressed me as he has, and I kept it secret because I did not wish you to feel anxious. This is the truth."

"Well, 'twould indeed have worried me more than I can express," said Knox, his eyes flashing fury; "and, by heaven, there shall be no jury trial if I catch the villain! But is it too late? which way did he go?"

"Not too late if he were afoot," spoke Mr. Woodbury; "but it seems he came on horseback. Only for that we might overtake him."

"Well, he may pay us another visit," said the widow, "and so I wish, Captain Knox, you would send us a supply of powder. Your regiment didn't leave us enough to scare the crows, and Mr. Woodbury has fired off the last charge."

"Yes, send us some by Billy Smith," spoke Jane.

"Not a bad idea," added Mrs. M'Neil, throwing the girl a grateful squint. Then in a careless, off-hand way, and seemingly intent on rubbing a spot off her apron, "but how is Smith?" she inquired.

"In good health when I left him a few hours ago," replied Knox; "and he would have come with me had he not been on duty. He has now two bullet-holes through his hat instead of one."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the widow, with a sudden flush on her cheek.

"Yes, and 'twas as close a shave as the first; the picket who fired at him must have been a capital shot."

"Well, is it likely that you will have a battle soon?" she continued, with a look of anxiety which the others could not help observing.

"Yes, very soon; everything points to it. Day by day our lines are drawing closer to the city, and when we make the attempt to fortify Bunker Hill, look out for hot work."

"May the good God spare you!" said Jane, in a low, but earnest tone, and laying her hand softly on Aaron's arm. "My comforter, my best friend, you shall have all my prayers." Then with a sudden glow on her cheek, "and in the hour of danger I will be with you on Bunker Hill! I can bring you water and powder, and if you get wounded I shall be near you. Do you forbid me?"

Oh, why as she spoke those words did Knox's brow become so red? why did his eyes burn with such brightness? why did he look at her with that yearning look which told more than ever tongue could have uttered?

"Alas! what have I done?" she murmured, bowing her head with an air of compassion, as she met his passionate gaze. "David is to be ever my betrothed, yet here I am giving Aaron hope. Oh, what have I done?" Then turning abruptly away, she followed Mrs. M'Neil into another room, her heart throbbing and tears coming to her eyes.

"She is shy about it," spoke Mr. Woodbury, as soon as Jane was out of hearing. "But cap., although most people wouldn't agree with me, I say 'tisn't a bit too soon to begin; no, not a bit. She is pining for David, yet the way she spoke just now shows that there is room for two in her heart; and nothing will bring back the roses to her cheeks so quick as a good husband; So, go ahead!"

"I am to be her friend, her guardian, nothing more," responded Knox, in a calm, but bitter tone, for he had read the young woman's countenance more truly than the Ancient had read it.

"Well, even on those terms marry her, for she is a rare flower. Love will take care of itself; 'twill come with time. So let a couple of days pass, in order not to appear too impatient, then lay siege to her with all your artillery; I'll back you up, and before the locusts have done singing she'll be yours."

For about a minute the young man did not speak, he was pondering deeply the advice of his aged friend. Already since he had heard from Mrs. M'Neil that David Jones was dead, the thought had flashed upon him that Jane M'Crea might now be his; but when he remembered how passionately she had loved the youth, and how true she was to whatever she became attached to, he had not dared to indulge the hope.

Yet, as Mr. Woodbury said, why not take her on any terms? Had he not been the best friend of her betrothed? What if at first all her heart remained for

David? Might not time at length open a small nook in it for himself? "Yes," he exclaimed, suddenly looking up with a radiant expression. "I will take your advice; already a glorious vision rises before me; all that I have suffered since the day when she rejected me is passing away. Oh, glorious vision! And may you prove a prophet!"

"Well spoken, cap!" said the Ancient. "And let me tell you that you're made of as good stuff as the girl—and she can't be beat. Yes, considering your trials, 'twas mighty plucky in you to keep so calm, and be so friendly with her. It showed that you truly loved her, and now depend upon it, Jane M'Crea thinks more of you than of anybody else on earth. Lord, what a team you two would make! It takes more than one generation to breed such stock. Jenny's mother was a Carver, and came straight down from old John Carver, first Governor of Plymouth; while the first of your name who came over from England, made the great treaty with Massasoit, chief of the Wampanoags, which remained unbroken for fifty years and proved such a blessing to the early settlers. And let me tell you there is more in this than folks imagine. We are often influenced by the ghosts of our forefathers: if on earth they have been cowardly, or lazy, or vicious, their spirits will give us no glorious inspirations; 'twill be only mud speaking to mud. But if they have had hearts of oak and kept the ten commandments, their descendants will show it just as you and Jenny show who you come from." Here the conversation ended with a warm shake of the hand, and after promising the old man that he would return before the week was over to begin his courtship, Knox set off for camp. And as he walked along the dusty road how changed his feelings were from what they had been in the early morning! He had left the tavern without even bidding Jane good-by, for he was coming back so soon; and although the news of David's death had greatly shocked him, already the remembrance of it had faded away like a cloud on the horizon at

sunrise. Never had the sky seemed so blue, never had nature smiled so sweetly.

"Oh, Jenny, Jenny," he cried, as he turned to look back at the village, "there are happy days in store for us!"

But Jane M'Crea spent the rest of the day in a very different mood. The widow tried hard to draw her into conversation about Billy Smith—for now that he had two bullet-holes in his hat, it was not likely that he would hesitate any longer to pop the question, and she wanted to consult the girl about sundry business matters which would have to be arranged before the wedding. But Jane scarcely opened her lips. Nor would she accompany Mr. Woodbury in his accustomed stroll after blackberries, although the old man was very loath to go without her.

"Oh David!" she said, as she stood gazing at the portrait of the youth, a little after sunset, and when the shadows were just beginning to steal around her bedroom, "Oh David! True to you now, true to you ever will I be. Oh, brightest sunshine of my happiest hours, where are you? Josiah Woodbury tells me—the gospel tells me—and my own soul speaks to me and says that you are somewhere and not gone to dust. Oh be near me, hover round me, be my guardian angel!" Then drawing nearer to the picture, "kiss me," she said, "kiss me." But her lips had scarcely touched it when it dropped from the nail on which it was hanging and in another instant lay shattered at her feet!

"Oh, Jenny, Jenny, was that your cry I heard?" exclaimed Mrs. M'Neil, presently rushing into the room—"goodness gracious, what has happened? One might think an evil spirit was in the house. Who gave that shriek?"

CHAPTER XVII.

"JENNY is a good lass but has grown very odd of late," said Mrs. M'Neil, to Josiah Woodbury, the second day after Knox's visit. "No doubt she loved David Jones to distraction and he was worthy of all her love, and I've seen her weeping once or twice since his death, but somehow the tears didn't flow as they ought. What she needs is a real, old-fashioned cry : Let the water pour down her cheeks like a shower and then after the rain you'd see the roses come out fresh and blooming. But no ; she goes about mourning for him in silence, doing her household work as if nothing had happened ; but her smile is a mockery to look at, and t'other day when she broke David's portrait you might have thought she had seen a witch in her room, she looked so white."

"Yes, she told me about it ; it affected her very much," said the Ancient.

"Well, now to come to the root of the trouble," pursued the dame, "let me say that you are somewhat to blame if the gal is what she is : you are all the time talking to her about supernatural things and praising that book of Cotton Mather's. Why don't you throw it in the fire ?"

"D'ye think that would better the case ?" returned the old man in a quiet tone. "What the book says would be no less true after you had destroyed it than afore. You can't deny that there are wonderful mysteries going on all around us, and Doctor Mather has only given an account of a few of these wonders."

"Humph ! Then you think she'd better keep on reading the book ? For my part, I think Jenny's health is too serious a matter to be trifled with in this way. Something ought to be done."

"Well, what would you recommend besides burning my library which consists of just that one volume ?"

"I'd be for sending her off a hundred miles from here, until she got all these odd notions out of her head. I'd hate to part with her even for a week, but I'd do it in order to have her come back what she was three months ago."

"Well, I have a better cure than that," said Mr. Woodbury, "something that will act like a charm."

"Humph! a dose of jalap, I suppose, or perhaps a prayer-meeting held over her?"

"No, no, my medicine isn't jalap nor prayers, but it's a very old drug, the oldest in the world—matrimony."

"Matrimony!" cried the dame, with a squint which went through and through the old man like an arrow. "Oh, Lord!"

Then after a pause, during which several visions passed through her mind—Mr. M'Neil, who had been a doting mate, Ebenezer Buckman, who had died a little too soon and only kissed her twice, and Billy Smith who had worried her into a very amorous condition without kissing her at all,—“Well, I've tried that once,” she continued, “and—and I won't say 'twasn't worth trying; when a body is thirsty he thinks a glass of water is the only thing in the world he wants. But Lord! when the water is down his throat what does it amount to? Why, he wouldn't pay two cents for another glass. Oh, Mr. Woodbury, if I could I'd make gals so that they'd never fall in love, now that is just my honest word. For what is love? It's a fever—a—a—well, it makes me wriggle all over to think of what it really is.”

“Nonsense! what would we poor men do if all women were of your way of thinking?” exclaimed the Ancient, who was indignant as well as surprised at such a speech, for a rumor that she was favoring Billy Smith had already spread through the village.

“Oh, sha! go 'long!” replied Mrs. M'Neil, snapping her fingers. Then after another pause, during which she moved uneasily about in her chair, “well, I tell you what the men folk might do: chop more wood,

plough four times as many acres of land, sweat harder. Yes, that'll cure you of love fever. It's stopping at your work, and musing and sighing and composing rhymes, in fact, picturing to yourselves all sorts of things, that raises the deuce with you. Why can't you let us alone?" Here she withdrew into another room with her right hand clenched, her left pressing her bosom; one half of her face all love, the other half dark as a thunder cloud: "I'm a goner," she sighed. "Dear Billy Smith; brave as a lion!—Can't back out; wish I could—no, I don't; yes, I do—Teased me into it; heavens!"

The old man lingered a few minutes longer in the parlor, talking to himself and declaring that the widow was a far odder creature than Jane M'Crea, then went back to the garden where he had left the girl half an hour before, picking peas, and where he had thrown out a few hints on the important subject about which he and Mrs. M'Neil had been conversing. He had not, however, mentioned Knox's name, but spoken in a general way; and although she had given him a look of sadness and reproach, when he first began to talk about it, she had listened respectfully to the very end, and he had left her with the hope that in her heart she agreed with him.

But when he returned to the garden he found that she was no longer there, nor was she in the orchard, nor in Billy Smith's cabin, nor up in her bedroom. And now while he is going about the house in search of her, let us see where she is.

We remember that the last time Knox was at the tavern he had revealed to her, not by word of mouth but by a look which there was no mistaking,—and which had even more power than words—that he loved her as much as he ever had loved her; and Jane knew that he was expected this evening, and she had a strong suspicion that when Mr. Woodbury had spoken to her about matrimony, he had only wanted to prepare the way for what Aaron himself was going to tell her. In order, therefore, that he might not find her at home when he

arrived, she had left the garden and crossing one of the fields south of the high road, was at this moment debating with herself whether she had best go on to Concord, or wait in the woods until it was dark, then return and glide up unperceived to her bedroom. And as she gazed about her, her eyes rested on the distant pine knoll and she thought of the being whom she had met there a few days before. And this thought troubled her, for how did she know but that he might be lurking in the neighborhood? "Well, I'll run the risk," she said, "and keep out of sight until I hear the whippoorwills, then go home."

Having thus made up her mind what to do, she slowly continued her way across the field, looking perhaps more low spirited and perplexed than we have ever seen her before. "Yet could I expect anything else?" she murmured, "Aaron's heart is not a heart to change—he loves me still." Then gazing up at the blue sky, "But my heart is not less stubborn than his: David thou art ever my betrothed!"

At length, when she thought that she was far enough from the village, she seated herself on a rock, and throwing off her hood, the better to enjoy the evening air, began to watch the cows strolling homeward. "How well they know the hour," she said, "perhaps 'tis the cry of the locust, growing fainter and fainter, which tells it to them; or do they judge by the sun as I do?"

Soon, her attention was attracted by a ridge of fantastic clouds which had risen suddenly in the west; castles, mountains, wild shapes of every kind, a vision of dreamland it seemed. Up, up, up, swiftly they were ascending. But in a few minutes the sun sank below the horizon, and then their bright colors began to fade, until in a little while they were changed to dark, threatening masses towering higher and higher in the air and looking like giant spectres come to prowl about the world in the night. Finally they disappeared entirely from view and then she turned her attention to the fire-flies that were sparkling in myriads over the meadow

and listened to the whippoorwill perched on an old tree close by, and as she heard its mournful note she thought of the Indian legend which said that it was the voice of a departed spirit. And so she sat upon the rock—how long she did not know ; but it was growing darker and darker ; star after star became hidden from view, and in the air was a strange, weird sound, as if hosts of invisible beings were rushing past ; yet where she sat the air was perfectly calm.

“ ’Tis time to go home,” thought Jane, “ but I’ll stay awhile longer ; I’m not afraid.” Suddenly, while she was listening to the approach of the storm wind, like a warning gun a peal of thunder rolled over the meadow and the forest and away, away it went farther, fainter, until it was lost in the distant east. There was something awfully grand and impressive in this first peal : it told what was coming. The whippoorwill at once became silent, the fireflies dropped in the grass, and the air, a moment before so still, grew violently agitated. But near as the tempest was, Jane would not retrace her steps to the village. There was a fascination which she could not resist in being all alone in the meadow at such an hour, yet she knew that when once it began to rain it would rain like a deluge. “ No, no,” she said, “ I’ll not go home.” Scarcely had she spoken, and while she was gazing up into the black night, there came a violent gust of wind which tore her hood out of her hand, followed by a flash of lightning that illuminated the whole sky and showed her the chain of clouds stretched in a vast line from north to south, like a demon army in battle array ; and in their swift approach they were almost over the spot where she was sitting. Then came another terrific peal of thunder and a darkness deeper than before, and while she was listening to its wild echoes the impulse came over her to seek the rock where Phebe Reed was buried.

“ Yes,” she said, “ I’ll go watch the storm from there.”

Accordingly, she hastened along a path which no eyes but hers could have followed on such a night, and

in five minutes was at the rock and advancing noiselessly over the mossy carpet toward the rosebush, when suddenly she stopped and held her breath: she heard a voice close by; who could it be? who besides herself would be there at that hour, and with a tempest approaching? With beating heart she listened; again the voice came and as she heard it her brain throbbed, and her very soul grew as troubled as the wild night around her.

"Oh, God!" she groaned, "didst thou bring me here for this? what shall I do? Give me light!" And as she spoke, Aaron's voice grew deeper and more pathetic, and there was something awful in the vow he was making: "Over thy grave, Phebe Reed," he cried, "I have come to pledge my undying love for Jane M'Cr . . . She rejected me once, she may refuse me again; but even as Josiah Woodbury has staid true to thee, so to my grey hairs, to my last breath, in silent grief, ever loving, I will stay true."

And while he was breathing forth his heart in these burning words, did he see the figure near him? Not at first, but presently he did and can we wonder if he was startled by the apparition?

Clad all in white and within a few steps of the rosebush it seemed to his excited imagination, the ghost of Josiah Woodbury's lost love. His eyes were riveted upon it, and brave as he was he was trembling, when a flash of lightning lit up the scene, and what did he behold? Not a ghost, yet, with a face pale enough for death, her long black hair streaming in the wind, her eyes fixed upon him, stood Jane M'Crea!

Then quick came darkness again and while the peal of thunder which followed the flash was shaking the very rock under him, he felt two soft hands touch his and a voice said, "take me, take me!" In another moment he was clasping her to his breast, and in the fullness of his joy he could not utter a syllable.

"Yes, I am yours," murmured Jane, "if my poor self can bring you all the happiness you say, take me and keep me; but, oh, do not ask what is impossible; never, never can I love another as I loved David."

"Dear, good, blessed Jenny," said Knox, as soon as he could find words, "on any terms you are a priceless jewel ; we will both love David together."

"Yes, yes, we will," then gently breaking loose from him, "but come," she said, "let us hasten to the village ; I felt a drop of rain just now ; in a few minutes 'twill be pouring ; come !"

"Aye, let us go as fast as we can," returned Knox, "and surprise Mrs. M'Neil and the Ancient."

And so with all speed they left the rock, Aaron leading the way, and through the woods and across the fields they went, in a perfect deluge of rain, and when at length they burst into the tavern, the widow let her knitting-needles drop, and Mr. Woodbury gaped so wide that the piece of calamus root he was chewing rolled out of his mouth.

"I'm a prisoner of war !" cried Jane, laughing. "Captain Knox caught me and I'm his prisoner for life."

"What mean you, child ? Are you joking ?" inquired the Ancient, rising from his chair.

"No, in downright earnest ; I am Aaron's betrothed."

"Well, you're not the first bird that's been willin' to live in a cage," exclaimed Mrs. M'Neil, squinting merrily at her, and at the same time opening wide her arms.

"And didn't I know 'twould bring back all her glory," continued Mr. Woodbury, tossing up his hands in the fervor of his admiration. "Look ! you might take her for a mermaid just fresh from the sea !" And while their eyes were fixed upon her, Jane blushed, then withdrew quickly to her room, looking indeed, with her dripping hair and drenched garment, through which her graceful form was not faintly revealed, like one who had come from the billows.

During her absence, Aaron, who seemed not to care a straw for his ducking, engaged in a jovial conversation with the Ancient, while Mrs. M'Neil plunged into the contents of a long letter from Billy Smith ; and

ever and anon as her eyes ran over the lines, her cheek would flush and she would mutter; "he calls me his swan! Lord, it's coming! He won't hang fire much longer! I'm caged, too." In fact, she was in such a state when she folded the letter up, that we believe if Mr. Smith had been present, she would have popped the question herself.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"DO you miss anything, dear Jenny?" said Knox, when the girl joined him the next morning under the elm tree by the green, where he had taken a seat and been waiting for her almost half an hour.

"Alas, yes, I do miss something very precious," she answered, as she placed herself beside him and let him steal one of her hands; "only for that I'd have been with you sooner, but I would not leave my room until I had thoroughly satisfied myself 'twas gone."

"Well, now don't be sad about it, look," and as he spoke, he showed her David's portrait so skillfully mended that only a few touches of her paint brush were needed to make it as good as ever. Then while she was gazing at it with surprise and delight, he went on to tell how he had persuaded Mrs. M'Neil to enter her chamber the evening before and bring him the broken image: "which she found," he added, "after not a little trouble, for she did not dream 'twas under the pillow."

"It shall always be near me," said Jane, pressing it to her lips

"And near me, too," said her betrothed, giving her a kiss; then, as he saw the bright color mount to her cheek, a feeling of unutterable joy came over him: "Yes," he murmured to himself, "this is one of those sunny days which I must make the most of. But I hope there are many like it in store for me."

"But Jenny," he continued, playfully jerking her

sleeve, "I wish 'twas autumn: this summer for me will pass very slowly?"

"And pray why? are you not happy now?" she inquired with a slight air of surprise.

"Happy! oh, I am indeed! But for this very reason I long to be happier still. And now, my beloved, suppose in October—when the chestnuts and apples are ripe, you bring me that happier day, be then my bride?"

"As you wish," she answered, after a pause, which seemed an age to Aaron, and yet 'twas only long enough for her thoughts to dwell a moment on David.

"Oh, Jenny," he continued, "how kind, how good you are not to take offence at my impatience! I ought not to trouble you thus, while your heart is still in mourning." Then clasping his hands, "Oh Lord," he cried, "give me patience! oh summer fly, away quick!"

"'Twill pass soon enough," she said, "but none the sooner for your wishing it. There is nothing so true and patient as time; it never disappoints us, 'tis sure to come round at last."

"Aye, you are right; and sunny days without number are coming too."

"I hope so; and may the end be far off!"

"The end?—Ah, true, but I will pray God to let me die the first. To live without you, hear no more your voice, see no more your dear face would make this beautiful world for me a dark and hateful abode, and—"

"Oh, do not speak thus!" said Jane, interrupting him and in a tone of reproach. "Remember, the Lord has willed it that I should lose David; but I will meet him again. So, Aaron, bear whatever may happen with faith and hope: If I am to die before you, you know you will meet me in the other world."

"In the other world!" he murmured, gently pressing her hand to his heart, "yes, an angel, a seraph, something beyond my brain to conceive! But would rather have you as you are at this moment. Oh, my adored, why, why is there such a thing as death?"

“Read your Bible and talk with the Ancient,” she replied. “His words, though often solemn, are full of wisdom and have never made me less cheerful. Yes, talk with him: he will tell you that nothing good is to be got without pain, that to reach Heaven we must pass through the valley of death. And believing firmly that beyond that valley there is something awaiting us far, far happier than all earth’s joys put together, you should not trouble yourself about which of us may die the first. Oh, Aaron, you on whom I am to lean, believe in Immortality! do not fall from the shining heights of faith. If you do you may never climb up again; nothing so dead as a dead faith.”

Then smiling and changing her tone, “but now, my lecture is over, I hope you are not angry with me for giving it to you?”

“Angry? Oh, no indeed! I thank you for it, with all my heart; and believe me, a woman like you can do more to keep a man on the straight path, than ten thousand preachers.”

“Come, come, don’t praise me,” she said, laughing as she rose from the seat. “But now look, there is Mr. Woodbury beckoning to us; let us go to breakfast.”

During the meal which followed, the conversation was more animated than usual, and the Ancient could not help rubbing his hands and giving sly nods to the widow, as much as to say, “I told you there was no drug like matrimony.” But when it was almost finished, Mrs. M’Neil straightened herself in her chair and clearing her throat made an announcement which surprised them all and caused a look of profound regret to come over the old man’s face.

“Yes,” she said, “I have been holding a council of war with myself and made up my mind to sell out and move to a distant part of the country. The change will do Jenny good and that I am sure will please Captain Knox, who seems quite taken aback by what I am saying.” Then fixing her squint full on him, “but Cap,” she continued, “if you reflect a little you will agree that I am wise: your betrothed will be all the better for go-

ing away from here. Lexington has sad associations for her, and besides, what happened on the pine knoll a few days ago makes it important that she should be hidden somewhere where that wretch, who is no doubt as cunning as he is bold, will not trouble her any more. Therefore, I am determined to sell my property and go off in search of a new home; Jenny can accompany me, for I won't be gone many weeks, and she'll return with blooming cheeks to pay you a visit in camp before the frost sets in; and perhaps, though it's almost too good to hope for, yourself and Mr. Smith may manage to get a furlough and pass awhile with us next autumn."

"I'm to be married in October," said Jane.

"What! so soon!" Then after a pause; "well, I don't see that that need alter my plans; all the more chance of cap's getting a leave of absence for his honeymoon," and the dame's cheek flushed as she thought of her own lover, for whose embraces she was longing with an ardor which nobody but Billy Smith himself suspected.

"But, why not settle down in Cambridge?" said Mr. Woodbury, who could not bear the idea of going far away from the grave of Phebe Reed.

"If Captain Knox thinks there is no danger of the town falling into the hands of the British, nothing would please me better," answered the dame.

"If we had a fleet to prevent General Gage receiving reinforcements from Europe," said Knox, "I would not hesitate to say 'come to Cambridge.' But we have not a single man-of-war afloat, while almost every day ships are sailing into Boston, and I shall be much astonished if there is not bloody work before the first snow falls."

"Do you really think so?" said Jane, in a serious tone.

"I do." Here there was a pause, during which Jane thought of her brother and determined to see him again before he went into battle; what Knox had told her about him, had filled her with alarm, lest the sting of remorse might drive him to some rash act.

"Well, in what direction do you mean to go to find your new home?" inquired Mr. Woodbury of the widow.

"I'm going to New York; always fancied that province. Guess if all had been like her we'd have had no war."

"Be not too hasty in judging New York," said Knox, "she may wheel into line yet, and do as well as Massachusetts."

"To be sure she will," exclaimed Jane, looking up with a glow on her cheek; "and so will every other province. Why, don't you remember, Mrs. M'Neil, those soldiers from Virginia and Carolina, whom we saw marching into Cambridge the day we were there? Doesn't that show how the whole country is roused?"

"And we are soon to have a Commander-in-chief," spoke Knox, "who will hold his commission, not like General Ward, from the legislature of a province, but from the Continental Congress, which, according to the latest news, has adopted the volunteers as a Continental army."

"Indeed!" said Jane, "I rejoice to hear it, and pray who is the new Commander-in-chief?"

"George Washington, a delegate from Virginia, a man in the prime of life, and from what Putnam says, just the very best person that could have been appointed; and I am proud to add 'twas our John Adams who first called the attention of Congress to him." *

"Well done, Adams!" cried Jane.

"Amen!" said Mr. Woodbury. Then as he filled his corn-cob pipe, "this George Washington," he added, "was General Braddock's aid-de-camp in the expedition against fort Duquesne, twenty years ago, where he fought with great bravery. But Lord! what could he do? Braddock, stubborn as a mule, ordered his soldiers to fight European fashion against the French and their Indian allies, and the British got cut all to pieces, and Braddock was killed. But this disaster on the Monongahela made young Washington shine out

* Sparks' Life of Washington, p. 97.

like a star, and ten to one 'tis Braddock's defeat has put him to-day at the head of our army."

"Well, now that we are talking about army news," continued Knox, "I may as well inform you that Congress has made Putnam a Major General; together with Artemus Ward, Philip Schuyler and Charles Lee."

"Putnam a general?" exclaimed Mrs. M'Neil, "why didn't they make you one? You are more fit for such a position than he."

"To be sure you are," put in Mr. Woodbury. "Old Israel is brave enough and folks never dared quarrel in his tavern when he kept one, and he stopped giving the boys liquor when they had enough; but that doesn't make him capable of being a general."

"Well, perhaps he has done something lately to warrant this promotion?" said Jane.

"You have guessed right," answered her betrothed; "and now I'll tell you all about it. You must know that a third of a milé northeast of Boston is an island called Noddle island, where there is very good pasturage. Well, our Provincial Congress not many days ago was recommended by the Committee of Safety to take measures to remove or destroy the cattle and hay there. And we did it thoroughly, Putnam helping wonderfully by his presence; for though he came only as a volunteer, he seemed to be waving his sword in a dozen places at once, cheering for America, cursing the red-coats; in fact, he acted in such a way that our men, who were about three hundred in number, looked on him as the real leader, and he came off the island a hero."

"Then you have been again under fire," exclaimed Mrs. M'Neil.

"Yes, and so has Smith; and I assure you he fought well."

This greatly pleased Jane M'Crea, who really liked poor Billy, while the widow put her hand in her pocket and felt the billet-doux which he had sent her and marvelled at herself for loving him so much: "'Tis a mys-

tery!" she murmured, "a mystery! one can't tell to-day what he'll think to-morrow; he was in a hurry and I wasn't; now I'm in a hurry and he isn't."

"Well, now tell us," said Jane, who took a lively interest in everything that related to the army, "who are the other major generals?"

"I am only acquainted with Artemus Ward," answered Knox, "who, as you probably know, is a graduate of Harvard and on the whole a pretty good officer. But for Schuyler and Lee I must refer you, dear Jenny, to the Ancient."

"Oh, I can tell you all about Schuyler," said Mr. Woodbury, laying aside his pipe: "he is a tip-top man, served in the French and Indian war, and was considered an excellent officer. But, dear me! I look on Phil as a boy. Why, I knew his grandfather Pete Schuyler, mayor of Albany in the province of New York and commander of the Northern militia. That must be somewhere in the neighborhood of eighty or ninety years ago." Here the old man's eyes twinkled, for he felt proud to be able to remember so far back.

"As for Lee," he continued, "I'm not sure I know him. There was a Britisher of that name in the French war, who afterwards became chief of the Mohawks, and if this is the same individual then he is smart enough for six, but I didn't like him; he wouldn't keep the Sabbath and swore as many oaths as Putnam. But, captain, are you certain his first name is Charles?"

Aaron nodded.

"Well, I was in hopes he might be Richard Henry Lee, of Virginia; a man of rare parts, who has always backed up Massachusetts in demanding her rights, and who got his province to organize the first committee of correspondence; though I believe we were not far behind Virginia in organizing one."*

Here Mrs. M'Neil, who found the conversation altogether too dry for her taste, got up from the table and

* Peyton Randolph says the messengers from the respective Legislatures passed each other on the road.

slipping on her hood, was about to sally forth for a visit to a neighbor when Knox caught her arm.

"Stay," he said, "don't go out yet. I have but a few minutes longer to remain here; give me the pleasure of your company."

"What do you mean?" cried Jane, turning towards him in surprise. "Surely you are not going back to camp so soon?"

"Oh, what would I not give for a longer holiday?" he replied. "But my pass expires at noon, so I must be off."

"Well, Cap., I'll take good care of her," said Mr. Woodbury. "I'll never let her walk out alone; but do your best to send us a little powder; my blunderbuss is of no use without it."

"I will," returned Aaron, rising from his chair and throwing a tender, anxious look on the girl. Then bending over her, "dear Jenny," he said, "do, do take care of yourself; remember, you are my betrothed."

As he whispered these words, what memories rushed upon her! The portrait, hidden in her bosom, throbbed like a pulse, and tears came to her eyes.

"Yes," she said, striving to hide her emotions, "I remember—I have not forgotten the promise I made you yesterday on the rock. But, oh, do not blame me if I still love David with all my heart and soul."

"Blame you? far from it; I honor and love you the more for being so true to him: it shows that you are Jane M'Crea."

"Thanks for your kind, generous words," returned Jane, smiling sweetly on him. "David's spirit will hover round us both; yes, there are sunny days ahead; in your arms I will find protection from that being whom I dread so much; oh, do not ask me to leave you when once I am your bride; Mrs. M'Neil may go off and live in her new home, but I will stay with the army."

"Well, well, we'll see when the time comes," said Knox; "but in the meanwhile let the Ancient be your guardian; he will take care of you."

Then having given her a kiss and shaken hands with

Mrs. M'Neil and his aged friend, Aaron set off for camp. And as he walked along, what did he care about the dust, or the scorching sun? What to him were the fourteen miles? He seemed to pass over them in a step, and when he got to camp, Billy Smith thrust his finger through his button-hole and asked him how much punch he had been drinking. "I can tell, cap.," said he, "by your sparkling eyes that the liquor was good: Only two things can make a man look as you do—punch and a jolly wife."

CHAPTER XIX.

THE day after Knox's visit to Lexington, quite a different looking person might have been seen entering the village. He appeared troubled about something, the sunburnt hue of his face was gone, and as he knocked at the door of Buckman's tavern, the effort which he made to hide his agitation was ludicrous.

He knew that it would never do to let the widow, to whose hand and five acres of land he aspired, discover what a powerful effect the probability of a great battle being fought within twenty-four hours had produced upon him, so he bit his tongue in his effort to calm himself.

"'Tis a scrape," he muttered, "which has to be gone through: I've often hunted and shot at the parson; now it's my turn to play coon."

But although he knocked twice, the door did not open, and in wonder he gazed up at the bedroom window on the second story, which Mrs. M'Neil occupied; then with his eyes fixed upon it he thrust his finger through bullet-hole number two and began to sing Yankee Doodle. But the words, presently, stuck in his throat, and with a suppressed oath and a stamp of his foot he cursed the day when he had enlisted. "Oh, Mrs. M'Neil," he groaned, "if I get killed 'twill be all your fault."

Just then a little boy approached and said that Mrs. M'Neil, Jane M'Crea and Mr. Woodbury were gone to spend the day in Concord and would not be back till night; whereupon Billy thanked the urchin, then inquired if there was anybody at work in the forge, which stood at the other end of the village; and when the boy replied that there was no use shoeing horses when there was nobody to drive them, he tossed him sixpence, then bade him go start a fire in the forge, adding that he would join him there in a quarter of an hour.

The boy ran off full of glee; while our friend unfastened a powder-horn, which he had brought with him, and hung it on the latch, then picking up a piece of paper proceeded to write something upon it. The message was sad from beginning to end: It began by informing the widow that a bloody battle was imminent, and closed with a fervent hope that if death overtook him she would have him buried half-way between Ebenezer Buckman and Mr. M'Neil. Then having rolled the paper up and stuck it in the key-hole, he went on his way to the forge. The lonely appearance of the village impressed him very much; only women and children and a few old men were to be seen, not a wagon drove by, not a single yoke of oxen, and the only cheerful voices he heard came from a troop of boys armed with sticks, playing soldier, and who, as he passed them, cried out, "hurrah for the color-bearer!" then begged him to stop and show them how to drill. But Billy shook his head and continued his way to the blacksmith shop, which he presently reached and where he found the urchin to whom he had given the sixpence, blowing the bellows over a glowing heap of coals.

It did not take our friend many minutes to rummage a pile of rusty iron which lay in one of the dark silent corners, and pick out exactly the piece he wanted; then having told the little fellow that he was thirsty and persuaded him to go for a pail of water, he threw open his coat and began to try how the iron would fit.

"Yes," he said with a grin, "a breastplate will help considerable: 'twas tempting Providence to go so long

without one. True, 'twill be mighty unpleasant to wear in hot weather; but life is worth sweating for."

With this he pulled off his coat, tucked up his sleeves and set to work; and when the boy returned with the water, he set him to work too, telling him that he was making something to put on a cannon.

But whether it was that the little fellow's strength gave out, or whether curiosity got the better of him, certain it is that he let go the handle of the bellows when the breastplate was only half finished, then picking up Billy's hat, asked if the holes in it were bullet holes. And when Mr. Smith nodded, the boy's black eyes sparkled and he went on to ask if he would be willing to part with the hat.

"What on earth do you want it for?" said Billy, stopping his work a moment to rub the perspiration off his face. "The hat is too big for you."

"Well, I'd make a show of it," replied the brat, with a precocious wink: "isn't it worth five cents to look at? Why just think, it has been through a battle!"

"Bah! hush your nonsense," exclaimed Billy, picking up the hammer and pounding away on the iron. But the urchin was not to be daunted by this rebuff, and when Mrs. M'Neil's lover stopped a second time to wipe his brow, he renewed his appeal.

"Look here!" he said, "I'd tell the folks it once belonged to one of our brave heroes that enlisted for Independence, and I'd describe the fight where he was killed; so why not let me have the hat? Indeed if I was you, I'd be glad to get rid of it; 'tisin't a lucky hat: ball number three may knock you over."

"I say hold your devilish tongue!" cried Mr. Smith, with a tremor in his voice; "you're the plaguyest chatterbox I ever met."

With this, he once more seized the hammer and put the finishing touches to the breastplate, after which he gave the boy another sixpence and bade him go gather some blackberries. Then as soon as he was gone he placed the armor against his breast and to his

inexpressible delight found that it covered the whole front of his body from his shoulders to his waist, nor did it weigh so much as he had expected.

"They'll wonder what has made me grow so stout," he said, with a chuckle; "but as long as I don't let 'em feel me, they'll never guess what is under my coat."

Presently, he burst into a laugh: "Ha! ha! ha!" he said, "what a row there'll be on the last day, when Gabriel blows his horn! ha! ha! ha! Then all that I have ever done will be made clear, and Mrs. M'Neil will call me a liar afore all creation. Bullet-hole number one was partly genuine; but number two—punched with my ramrod! Lord! her squint when she finds that out will scare the very angels! Ha! ha! ha!"

And so for several minutes he laughed until the tears came to his eyes; then suddenly he became silent, the look of trouble spread over his face again and after casting a fond glance at the anvil, he set off on his way back to camp, feeling like the most miserable of men. When the soldier boys cheered and presented arms with their sticks as he walked by, he would not so much as look at them, and when an old woman asked him to stop and tell the news he made believe that he was deaf. But on his cabin he turned his eyes with throbbing heart, and at once back rushed a thousand happy memories. He thought of the October mornings when he had sallied forth to hunt coons, of the evenings when he had returned home laden with spoil; he heard again Jane M'Crea's sweet voice summoning him to the tavern for a bowl of punch; he pictured to himself the cosey sitting-room with the blazing fire, where the girl used to sing and read aloud to Mrs. M'Neil and the Ancient, and where he had first conceived the idea of making the dame change her name. But it was when he went by the strip of woods where the parson had his home that he was the most violently agitated, and he kept his face turned the other way, through a superstitious notion that if he happened to see the coon looking at him it would be an omen that the creature had come to bid him an eternal farewell.

And so on he tramped for several miles, depressed in spirits, as well as worried by the breastplate to which he had not yet grown accustomed, until at length a farmer's wagon overtook him and to his great relief carried him the rest of the way.

Here we might close the chapter, but before we do let us inform the reader that Mrs. M'Neil, Jane and the Ancient got back from Concord at about six o'clock in the evening, and that Mr. Smith's note was found safe in the key-hole and read with not a little emotion by her to whom it was addressed. "What a pity that I was not here to-day!" sighed the widow, after confiding to Jane M'Crea Billy's mournful message: "Oh, what a pity! will I ever see him again?"

Without making any response, the girl drew Mr. Woodbury aside, then having told him what her wishes were and after he had made as strong an opposition to them as he could, they both went to the stable, harnessed a fresh horse to the wagon, and were about to drive away when Mrs. M'Neil stopped them.

"If you are going to the camp take me with you," she said. But Jane would not listen to it: "No," replied the latter, "you have not yet got back your strength; I insist, dear Mrs. M'Neil, that you remain at home."

"Well, Jenny, may the Lord keep you safe: yes, I'll stay and make preparations for selling the tavern; but don't be gone long, and when you see Mr. Smith tell him—oh tell him that he mustn't do anything rash, for I am quite convinced that he is a hero; and that if he passes safe through the battle he mustn't lose a moment coming here."

Having given the good woman her word that she would do as she desired, Jane pressed her hand, then drove off with Mr. Woodbury, who, with the powder horn which Billy Smith had brought slung on his shoulder and the rusty blunderbuss in the hollow of his arm, presented a sight well calculated to excite mirth among the soldiers of General Ward's army.

CHAPTER XX.

SINCE his interview with Jane M'Crea on the pine knoll, Count von Meyer had pondered deeply every word which she had uttered on that occasion.

"Oh, Helen, David's sister, where are you?" had lingered in his ear and wrung from him many a savage curse. "Yes," he would say, as he paced back and forth in his room, "this American girl must have known David Jones, for he lived in the neighborhood of Boston; and those words show that there was a stronger link than friendship between them; and if he be alive he will prove an obstacle in my path; her love for him has already saved her from falling into my net; but I will brush him aside, I will crush him; she shall not escape me."

But whenever this lewd intriguer found himself in Helen Jones' company, the expression of his face would change and become as mild as that of a lamb. Yet even in its gentleness lurked something artful and deceiving, which Helen was at length beginning to recognize, and she had told Nanny that in future, whenever he paid her a visit, she must remain in the room.

On the evening of June the sixteenth we find him seated beside her, with one arm in a sling and looking a little paler than when we saw him last, while Nanny is close by, working a pair of moccasins. The presence of the latter was very irritating to the count, and it was only after Helen had assured him that her maid was faithful and would never repeat anything she heard, that he ventured to open the conversation. As usual, he began by speaking about her brother, expressing regret that he had not yet received any news of him; then endeavored to console her by saying that the outbreak of hostilities had thrown the post into great disorder, but that there was, no doubt, a letter on the way.

"Alas! 'tis what you tell me every time," said Helen,

dropping her eyes to the floor, for although he looked as mild as she had ever seen him, there was something in his gaze which she did not like to meet, something which reminded her of the evening when he had spoken about Jane M'Crea and said, "she is mine—'tis fate." Nor did she venture to ask how he had hurt his arm, nor what had been the result of his visit to Lexington, yet she suspected that things had not gone well, and half regretted the part which she had taken to bring about an interview with the American girl.

"Well, do not look so disappointed," he continued; "true, there is likely to be a good chance within the next few days for a brave youth to win his spurs; but there will be other battles."

"What! Is there going to be a move?" exclaimed Helen, lifting her eyes.

"Yes, our generals are less sanguine than they were a week ago to believe that these troubles with the colonies will be speedily arranged, and offensive operations have been determined on. An undisciplined horde of peasants besieging the king's troops is something not to be tolerated; let them be driven back to their barnyards in time for the harvest! said Burgoyne. Ha, ha!"

"I do not wonder you laugh," spoke Helen; "Methinks the men who are building those forts which you showed me yesterday with the telescope, are not what we would call peasants, and to drive them back to their barnyards may be easier said than done."

"I am quite of your opinion," pursued the count. "Still, all the more reason for making the attempt. If they succeed in freeing themselves from England, their intelligence and capacity for self-government will render them a source of danger to the old world, and our peasantry will have an example set before them which may end in shaking every throne."

Here there was a pause, during which Helen thought of the American youth who had guided her the last part of her journey through the forest, and as she thought of him she sighed and wondered would they ever meet again.

"But what I have told you about an offensive move," he continued, "is hardly more interesting than another piece of information which I picked up this morning: it is that the ministry have determined to rouse the Indian tribes and use them against the colonists; and General Gage is about to send an emissary to Virginia* well supplied with gold, to bribe the savages of that Province, while another will be dispatched to the tribes in northern New York. General Burgoyne foolishly insisted that only the scalps of those who might be killed in fair fight should be paid for,† and when I heard that, I could hardly keep from laughing: believe me, the red men will make no such nice distinctions." Here he looked slyly at Nanny, while Helen Jones buried her face in her hands and sighed.

"What grieves you?" said the count, who, keen as he was, did not yet fully understand the girl.

"This last piece of news makes me blush for my country," she answered, looking boldly at him. "Have we not troops enough to subdue the rebellion? Must we enlist savages to help us? Oh, shame on the ministers! shame on all who favor such a cruel policy!" and this was spoken with an air of scorn for which he was not at all prepared. But his countenance betrayed neither astonishment nor anger, and in a voice like a lamb, he declared that he quite shared her horror of such a mode of warfare. Helen's expression, however, did not change; she read his heart at last, and without making any further remark she let him talk on. Nor, when he rose to leave and bowed his adieu, did she so much as open her lips, nor quail an instant before his glittering eye. "I must beware," he said to himself, as he withdrew, "I must watch her closely, for she is changing. Others besides myself may win her confidence; my game is only begun; she must help me throw the net around my victim, or woe, woe, to her!"

And now, dear reader, let us cross the lines and see what Aaron Knox, Harry M'Crea and Billy Smith are

* *Lossing* I. p. 160.

† See Burgoyne's Speech to the Indians, June 21, 1777.

doing this evening—the eve of Bunker Hill. In Aaron's tent we find Harry talking with his friend, while behind the canvas dwelling is Mrs. M'Neil's lover, seated on an empty powder keg, with a negro standing over him, cutting his hair.

Little does the barber know the motive which has prompted the color-bearer of the Second Massachusetts regiment to part with such a quantity of his locks. Of course he thinks it is the intense heat, and Billy is careful not to undeceive him.

"I'll stuff my hat with wet grass," said Smith, when Ike Shattuck expressed a fear lest if he cut off any more hair the scalp might blister, "so cut away!" Then speaking to himself with a grin, which was tempered, however, by a shudder, "nothing like taking all the chances: there is going to be a fight; probably afore to-morrow noon I'll be face to face with a grenadier; but when the rascal stretches his bloody hand out to grab me, he'll get nothing but grass; ha! ha!" and the barber wondered what made him so mirthful.

Lying at our friend's feet was a pair of boots such as Lexington had never seen, and which he had bought of a soldier belonging to the Carolina regiment for the purpose of going a clamming. They reached far above his knees and were not only waterproof but bullet proof—at least so he had been told—and now as he stooped and ran his fingers along the rough, tough leather, he blessed the alligator whose hide made such good armor for his legs.

"My head, my breast, and my walking pins," he continued, soliloquizing, "have received all possible attention; I can do nothing more for them. But my breadbasket—blessed store-house of many a pumpkin pie—my stomach, alas, what can I do for it?" Here he gave such a groan that Ike Shattuck asked if the scissors had cut him.

Presently, without making any response, Billy again began to grin: "Yes, yes," he said to himself, "I'll shield it with the Bible which I'll put in my haversack: thank the Lord I didn't tear any more leaves out, and

if there were a dozen more Epistles I'd like it all the better. However, it may be thick enough, and if it saves me, I'll believe in Bible class and prayer-meetings as I never did afore."

While Mr. Smith was thus vibrating between hope and despair, now shuddering, now grinning and sometimes doing both together, Harry and Aaron had come out of the tent, and the latter was repeating to his friend what he had already told him more than once during the past half hour: "You have heard Jenny say with her own lips that she has forgiven you, so be not wild in your grief, do not let remorse impel you to throw away your life."

These words reached the negro's ear and he wondered what they meant; so did Smith, and both turned and gazed at Harry M'Crea, whose countenance too plainly revealed his inward sufferings. A little later than this, and when the sun had been set about an hour, Colonel Brewer's regiment and Morgan's riflemen, followed by two pieces of artillery, might have been seen entering the village of Cambridge. The rumor that an important movement was about to be made, had flown from mouth to mouth, and the excitement in the street where General Ward had his headquarters, was very great. Nobody knew whither they were bound; all was guess-work. Some shrewd ones, however, and among these was Knox, believed that they were going to Bunker Hill. But with all the excitement not a shout was raised, and when the men uncovered themselves to listen to the prayer of President Langdon, of Harvard College, the silence was most impressive. Then when the prayer was finished, they took up their march toward the Mystic river, led by Colonel William Prescott,* who had been chosen to carry out the enterprise on account of his known courage and military talent, and to whom alone the object of it had been revealed. In rear of the column followed two wagons, loaded with picks and spades.

It was nine o'clock when they reached the strip of

* Grandfather of the historian.

land which connects the peninsula of Charlestown with the mainland. Above them the stars were shining, but along the surface of the earth hung a dense fog which hid from view the lights of Boston as well as the British men-of-war; and so little did the enemy suspect what was going on, that when Colonel Prescott halted a few minutes at the isthmus to tell his command what work they had before them, they heard the sentinel on the nearest ship, (the *Cerberus*—36 guns) call out, "All's well."

Having made known to the troops the object of the expedition, Prescott ordered captain Nutting to proceed with a company along the south shore as far as the village of Charlestown, and to keep a bright look-out for boats—for the Committee of Safety had informed General Ward that just such a move as the present one, the British themselves were about to make;—then with the main body he proceeded to ascend Bunker Hill, which rises gradually from the water's edge for three hundred yards or so and is connected on the south, by a stony ridge, with another elevation called Breed's Hill.

Having got to the summit, a conference was held and the officers were requested to express their views as to the best spot for throwing up an intrenchment.*

While they were deliberating General Putnam arrived and in his usual bluff way, seasoning his words with an oath, declared that Richard Gridley, who had served as engineer in the British army, ought to be judge of the matter. Accordingly, by Gridley's advice the recommendation of the Committee of Safety to fortify Bunker's Hill was so far disregarded, that only a few men were left there, with orders to throw up a slender earth-work—sufficient to cover a retreat in case a reverse happened, while the rest of the troops went on to Breed's Hill, which being nearer Boston was certainly the better place for a fortification.

Here they stacked arms, then having marked out the lines of a redoubt eight rods square, they all, with

* Irving I, p. 467.

the exception of Billy Smith, took off their coats and set vigorously to work. But Mrs. M'Neil's lover, although he did not move quite so briskly, nor rid himself of any portion of his clothing, nevertheless gave all his strength to the task, and one might have supposed from the sweat which poured down his cheeks, that he was going to wash away.

And thus they toiled, hour after hour; never did men work with greater energy, for they knew that it was in a glorious cause and that whatever had to be done must be done before daybreak. Steadily, inch by inch, the redoubt took shape and form and rose up higher and higher; Colonel Prescott every now and then would walk down to the water's edge to satisfy himself that a sharp lookout was kept by the guard stationed there, nor was it until the earth-work was half finished that he allowed them to take any rest.

Then for a short while they laid down their implements, and while they were conversing in undertones and wondering how late it might be, they heard eight bells strike aboard the *Cerberus*: it was midnight, and again the sentinel cried—"All's well!"

CHAPTER XXI.

JANE M'Crea had no intention, when she left Lexington with Mr. Woodbury, to place herself in danger merely in order to have a better view of the battle which Smith had told them, in his note, was imminent. Knox, as we remember, had begged her to take care of herself, not to risk her precious life, and it is probable that she would have obeyed him and remained quietly at home, but for a wish to see her brother before he went into action, and let him hear once more that he was forgiven.

It was dark by the time she reached Cambridge, and of course too late to visit the camp, so she put up at an inn, where the negro who took charge of the horse and wagon recognized her, for he had been em-

ployed by Mrs. M'Neil during the past winter, to chop wood, and without waiting to be asked any questions, he began to talk about the mysterious expedition which had started off a little while before.

"Yes, Miss M'Crea," he said, "I sharpened captain Knox's sword this evening in a dreadful hurry, for the order to march came all of a sudden, and Billy Smith made me cut all his hair off, and I can't help thinking it's the last time I'll ever use scissors on him. Where they have gone to I don't know, but it is to fight sure, for every man had thirty rounds of ammunition."

"Was my brother with them?" inquired Jane in an anxious voice.

"Yes, Morgan's rifles, whom master Harry has joined, were among the troops that marched through here. But your brother didn't look as he used to look last winter when I worked at Buckman's tavern; never saw a person so changed, and from what I heard captain Knox say to him just afore they left camp, I can't help thinking that there is something on master Harry's mind."

This was enough; Jane at once determined to see her brother at every hazard; in vain Mr. Woodbury tried to calm her; she would listen to nothing he said, nor even enter the inn until she had made the negro promise to do his utmost during the night to learn what direction the troops had taken, and then call her at daybreak.

Ike Shattuck carried out her wishes with zeal, and rapped on her bedroom door at such an early hour the next morning, that the twilight had scarcely begun to steal in through the window.

It was only three o'clock, the morning star was shining in the heavens, not a cock was yet crowing when, accompanied by the Ancient, she followed her guide along the road which led to Charlestown Neck. The gentle breeze from the west had driven away the fog and she was gazing in wonder on the great black hulls of the men-of-war, when Mr. Woodbury interrupted her thoughts. "Jenny," he said, "I had a strange dream

last night; you have never been at sea, so I don't think you could ever have such a dream: If you like I'll tell it to you."

"Yes, do," returned Jane, her eyes still fixed upon the ships. "I'm sure I should love the ocean; tell me something about it."

"Well, you must know that when I was young, Phebe Reid and I went down the coast together as far as Baltimore, on her father's schooner; and I was thinking of that happy sail with Phebe when I went to bed, and so dreamt about her and the sea. I saw my betrothed standing on a shiny beach, her long hair flowing loose down her shoulders as yours often does—and 'twas nigh as long as yours, but instead of black 'twas golden color and like as if sunbeams were always resting on it. Well, there she stood so close to the water that the ripples played at her feet. The ocean near the shore was calm as a lake, but further out it suddenly changed and became dark and angry; high rolling waves and whirlpools stretched away to the horizon. "What is Phebe gazing at so intently?" I asked myself, for although I looked and looked I could see no ship, nothing but the wild waters. At length I did discover what seemed to be a piece of wreck covered with barnacles; 'twas rolling round and round, now sinking now rising to the surface and above it a flock of sea gulls were hovering.

And while I watched it, it gradually changed: the seaweed which floated out from its sides took the shape of arms, then two eyes appeared, but they were hollow and like the eyes of a dead man, and the barnacles dropped off the face and showed numberless wrinkles, and while I was watching it I became filled with horror and awe, for who do you think it was?—Myself!" Here Jane turned and looked at her old friend with a shudder, but without noticing it he went on with his dream.

"Well, nearer and nearer and nearer the corpse drifted to the line where the angry sea turned into shiny ripples. At length on top of a monstrous billow I saw

it arise, then for a moment it disappeared, and when I discovered it again, lo! 'twas changed! A youth was wading toward the beach, bathed in soft light, and as he advanced, a girl rushed to meet him and distinctly I heard Phebe say, 'welcome, welcome, Josiah, to the Island of the Blest!'"

"There is death in that dream," thought Jane M'Crea, when her companion had finished; "'Tis prophetic." But of course she did not tell him this, but as they walked along, gently pressed his arm and recalled the many happy days which she had passed with him.

At last when they arrived at the isthmus, their guide halted and informed her that if she crossed over she might find it very difficult to return.

"The ships," said he, "can sweep this strip of land with their cannon: I'm going ahead myself to take part in the fight and will deliver faithfully any message you may give me; but I advise you not to cross."

Jane, however, was determined to proceed, while Mr. Woodbury declared that whatever the danger might be, he would share it with her. So with daylight rapidly advancing they pursued their way together, and the young woman threw off her hood to catch as much as possible of the salt air, for 'twas something new to her and she could not but think that she liked it even better than the smell of new-mown hay.

Twenty minutes more brought them to the redoubt, which by this time was six feet high, and presented, at least so Jane M'Crea thought, a very formidable appearance.

It would be difficult to describe Knox's astonishment when he caught sight of her; he could scarcely believe his eyes. But he was vexed as well as astonished, and Jane read his thoughts plainly enough when she saw him frown at the Ancient.

"Don't scold him," she whispered, pressing Aaron's hand; "he begged me not to come, but I would not mind him; I have disobeyed you both; and were the danger twice as great, I should have come." Then looking around her, "but where is Harry?" she said.

As she mentioned the youth's name Knox's face grew less stern ; " Oh, I know now why you are here," he answered, pointing him out ; "'twill indeed rejoice him to see you ; yes, you were right to come, for he is sorely depressed."

At once Jane flew to her brother's side, without stopping a moment to greet Billy Smith, and deaf to the flattering remarks which were being showered upon her by a hundred voices.

In low, earnest tones she addressed him, and with head bowed on his breast he listened ; then when she had poured out to him all that was in her breast, " dear Jenny," he said, " thank God for the sight of your face ! stay near me, speak to me often, no one but you can drive the ghost from my side ; true, you had already forgiven me, but when I left you the ghost came back."

" Yes I will stay with you until I have brought peace to your soul," returned Jane ; then striving hard to conceal her emotion, " I too have had trials ; I too have a ghost which pursues me ; but I do not grieve as I did and am much calmer since I have prayed. Therefore, call on the Lord ; He can comfort you far more than I can."

" Yes, yes, I will pray," exclaimed Harry, looking up ; " oh would that I had always done what you told me ! But, sister, how unreasonable, how selfish I am to ask you to remain here ! This hill may be the scene of a bloody conflict ; already since you have spoken I feel a wonderful relief, so do not stay another minute ; go back to Lexington."

Without promising what she would do, she now returned to the side of her betrothed who was calling her and who, seconded by Mr. Woodbury, used all his eloquence to persuade her to withdraw to a place of safety.

But impressed by the apparent strength of the earthwork and the two cannon, and the twelve hundred rifles, she begged so hard to tarry awhile longer, at least until the first shot was fired, that Aaron had to yield. Then Putnam, Prescott, Gridley, Dan Morgan,

and a number of others gathered round her and asked many questions; for Bob Broughton, of Marblehead, had told far and wide what she had done on the nineteenth of April, and Jane found to her surprise that she enjoyed not a little fame. But among them all not one had the same peculiar sentiment for the girl which Billy Smith had. "They think they know what she is," he muttered, as he stood eyeing her from a distance, "but they don't: She's good and she's beautiful, and she's brave, but other gals may be all that, who yet wouldn't do what she has done—keep a secret."

Presently, the current of his thoughts changed and a tremor seized him: "I hope," he sighed, "that she'll not remain here. It's in her to see all that is to be seen to-day and take a hand in it too; her hair is twisted into two stout braids so as not to be in her way; yes, she's in fighting trim and if I don't act like a hero, I'd better take off my breastplate and die."

While he was thus soliloquizing, the girl escaped from her admirer and was about to address Billy a few kind words and give him Mrs. M'Neil's message, when she found herself carried away by a crowd of soldiers who were rushing to the breastwork.

The fortification had just been discovered by the sentry aboard the *Lively*, a twenty gun ship anchored between the *Cerberus* and the *Falcon*. In a few minutes a boat was seen to push off from her side, then while it was being rowed with all speed to the city with the startling intelligence, the captain of the frigate sprung his cable and without waiting for orders from the admiral, opened fire. "Down heads!" shouted a voice, which sounded very like old Putnam's, and almost before the word had escaped him something flew over the redoubt with a wild, unearthly scream, which made even Jane M'Crea hold her breath and caused Billy Smith to thrust his nose an inch into the ground—the log cabin, the parson, the widow, the graveyard all went whirling through his brain in a sort of infernal jig, and what kept him from losing his wits is more than we can tell.

The boom of the cannon at once roused the slumbering city ; men and women might have been seen rushing into the streets and crowding the roofs of the houses ; the drums beat to arms ; hurry and confusion everywhere, and when General Gage heard the alarm he ground his teeth.

"The Yankees have stolen a march upon us!" he said, when in the course of half an hour he found himself in council with Howe, Clinton and Burgoyne. "Boston will be destroyed unless we drive the rebels from the heights," cried Count von Meyer to Helen Jones, whom he saw looking out of her window.

"God save the King!" returned Helen, forgetting in her excitement the change which had come over her feelings towards him, then pointing to a regiment of mariners, who were marching at quick step down the street, asked if he was going to join them.

"I wish I could," answered the count, "but with one arm disabled I should be only in the way ; so I shall have to remain behind. May I crave the pleasure of spending the day in your company?"

Without making any response Helen at once drew back and closed the window.

While these few words were passing between the Hessian and David's sister, Aaron Knox was again endeavoring to persuade his betrothed to retire from the hill ; and this time she yielded to his urgent solicitations and, accompanied by Mr. Woodbury, went off with quick step toward the isthmus.

They had proceeded, however, but a short distance, when they met five hundred New Hampshire men led by Colonel Stark, a veteran of the French war, who informed them that it would be very rash to try and cross Charlestown Neck, swept as it was by the guns of the Cerberus, and that four of his command had been killed there.

For a moment Jane hesitated what to do, the Ancient kept silent, but so many voices besides Stark's urged her to go no further, that she concluded to brave Knox's displeasure and return to the fort.

"Well, well, I shan't scold you," said Aaron, when he saw her re-appear, "since you spoke to Harry, he is ever so much changed, he was smiling a moment ago; but Jenny, I tremble to think of what may happen before the sun goes down."

"Do not worry about that," returned the girl; "while you fight, I will pray God to give us the victory. "Look! the sun is just rising, too early to think of sunset."

"Right, right!" he exclaimed, "I will do my duty and if we escape I shall cherish you more than ever." With this he led her to the platform on which the soldiers were to stand while firing, and having made her lie down under it, he listened with anxious heart to the booming of the cannon, which was much louder than before. The Somerset (68) the Glasgow (24), two floating batteries and a fort on Copp's hill at the north end of Boston, had added their fire to that of the Cerberus and Lively, and the air about the redoubt sounded as if countless demons were howling through it. Not a few of the volunteers grew pale and trembled. Gridley, the engineer, heard with dismay the balls thump against the redoubt, and Stark told Putnam that it was worse than anything they had known in the French and Indian war.

Suddenly Knox sprang up from Jane's side and before she could ask where he was going, mounted the parapet and there for more than five minutes—hours they seemed to her—he stood beside Colonel Prescott * as calm and unmoved as if he were at home in Lexington.

This daring act produced the desired effect on the untrained yeomen, who were immediately inspired with fresh courage; and 'tis related that General Gage, who was surveying the hill with a glass, saw Prescott and the captain and determined at any cost to take the redoubt, for if left in the hands of such heroes the king's army would be forced to evacuate the city.

But impatient as the British commander was to be-

* Frothingham p. 126.

gin the assault, there were five floating batteries whose fire he wanted to add to that of the fleet, before he should send his regiments over to the Peninsula, and these batteries could not be brought into position until flood tide. Accordingly, Admiral Graves received orders to suspend the bombardment, and for the next few hours Colonel Prescott had a chance to make further preparations to meet the infantry which he knew were coming.

Once more pick and spade were called into use ; the damage caused by the ships was repaired, and a breast-work commenced which was intended to run from the northeast corner of the fort, one hundred yards in a northerly direction to a marshy piece of ground, where was a rail fence which extended to the shore of Mystic river. A messenger was likewise dispatched for re-inforcements : and here be it related the man never came back ; he was shot while crossing Charlestown Neck, bearing an answer from General Ward that no troops could be spared, as the enemy's real point of attack would undoubtedly be Cambridge.

And so under a scorching sun the patriots toiled with might and main to strengthen their position weary, hungry, thirsty they toiled. But Jane M'Crea and Mr. Woodbury did their best to supply them with water from a spring, and the girl's voice cheered them more than a band of music would have done. Hour succeeded hour ; the tide at length turned and with the rising water came the other floating batteries which were to take part in the attack ; and as Colonel Prescott watched them turn their grim sides towards the hill, he wondered why the re-inforcements he had sent for did not arrive : he had only eighteen hundred men, and of these but one in twenty had a bayonet ; what chance had he of victory over the well-drilled battalions which were assembling at the long wharf, Boston ?

At length, between noon and one o'clock the ships again opened fire, while at the same time a host of barges carrying the 5th, 38th, 43d and 52d regiments of light infantry, besides ten companies of grenadiers, all

under the command of General Howe, moved towards Charlestown.

Colonel Prescott immediately ordered his men to resume their arms and a part of the 2d Massachusetts regiment took possession behind the unfinished breast-work, and the fence which skirted the marsh; and as Billy Smith staggered by with the colors, Jane M'Crea whispered, "I know you have turned over a new leaf; do nothing rash; Mrs. M'Neil's heart is already yours." These words, however, produced a very slight effect upon him; he was thinking of his breastplate, and wishing that his whole body were covered with iron.

Slowly the barges approached. They did not go, however, to Charlestown, but changing their course when they were about half way, went round to the east side of the peninsula, where near the north of Mystic river the troops disembarked. Prescott divined their object, which was to take him in flank and rear, while his front would be exposed to the cannonade of the fleet, and with anxious eye he gazed towards the isthmus; but there was no help coming.

Having landed his force and surveyed the American position, General Howe did not at once advance, but sent back for the 47th regiment of light infantry and the 1st battalion of marines (the latter were under Major Pitcairn, the same officer who had fired on the militia at Lexington), then with these reinforcements, and precisely at two o'clock the royal troops in two divisions—one of which was to penetrate the American lines at the marshy ground, the other to storm the redoubt—marched forward.

At the same time the fire of the fleet redoubled in fury, and the battery on Copp's hill began to throw hot shot into Charlestown, which was soon in a blaze.

It was a solemn and trying moment: the smoke of five hundred buildings rose and hung like a funeral-pall over the heights, concealing from view the ships and the city, and out of the black cloud shells and balls howled and chased one another in an infernal race, while on came the enemy.

Knox implored Jane M'Crea not to stir from under the breastwork; Morgan's men, with their rifles resting on the parapet, and the rattlesnake flag waving over them, watched like panthers from an ambush, and among them you might have seen the hoary head of Josiah Woodbury; on their left were Stark's New Hampshire men, rugged as their own mountains and determined to do an honest day's work, while beyond, and almost at the further end of the unfinished lines, you caught a glimpse of the flag of New England, and despite Knox's earnest request that she should lie still, Jane could not resist the temptation to rise and gaze at it a moment, and as she did so she murmured a prayer for Billy Smith. She had scarcely taken her eyes off the flag, when a man sprang into the redoubt, and rushing up to Colonel Prescott, exclaimed, "I am come to serve as a volunteer." The girl was struck by his appearance, and observed him well. His age might have been thirty five, his face was gentle, but the fire which flashed from his eyes told that a patriot heart throbbed in his breast. It was fortunate that she looked at him, for never again did she see Joseph Warren alive. In about a quarter of an hour the British, whose movements were slow, owing to their heavy knapsacks and the long grass through which they had to march, opened a scattering fire, and it was hard for the Americans, as they saw the red uniforms coming nearer and nearer, to remain silent. But they did, thanks to Putnam, Prescott, and Warren, who implored them not to pull trigger until they were ordered.

At length when the enemy had got to within eight rods, Colonel Prescott waved his sword and shouted "fire!" As if every gun had been but a single piece, a line of flame flashed from the redoubt to the far end of the unfinished breastwork, and the whole front rank of the British fell, while the entire body was brought to a halt. In vain did the officers cheer and strive to lead on their men, a few random shots were fired in return, then turning their backs to the fort, they withdrew in tolerable order to the foot of the peninsula

At once up sprang the Americans to pursue, and it was all that Morgan and Prescott and Putnam could do to hold them back.

"'Tis a glorious victory, but we ought to be allowed to drive them into the sea," exclaimed Harry M'Crea.

"Aye, a glorious victory," rejoined Knox; "but alas, it has cost us dear! we have lost one who was worth all the soldiers under Lord Howe." Right in the forehead a bullet had entered and he could not have felt a moment's suffering, so dead did he drop at Jane M'Crea's side. The girl had often heard Aaron and Mr. Woodbury speak of Joseph Warren as being one of the earliest members of the Sons of Liberty, the man who had done more than any other in New England to fire the people's hearts against oppression; but she had little thought that he would breathe his last breath with his head touching her lap.

"He is gone; but what he has done will not die," she said, turning to her betrothed, who with a crowd of others were gazing at the body.

"True," returned Mr. Woodbury, "and his death is only a stepping stone to a better world; he has left us in his early manhood; may his example inspire us to fight ten times harder."

In a little while Colonel Prescott called his men back to their posts; the enemy, he said, might make another attack. And he was right. After an interval of about twenty minutes, their bayonets were again seen approaching, their ranks were well closed, and a band of music was playing "God save the king!" On they came, nearer and nearer, and looking horribly grim through the smoke, which the burning houses of Charlestown sent up to hide the sun-light. Again the Americans crouched behind the breastwork and among them, despite Jane M'Crea's earnest entreaties, was the Ancient with his rusty blunderbuss.

This time the assailants were allowed to advance even closer than before, the whites of their eyes could be seen; then again from right to left, from the rattle-snake flag to the pine-tree and cross, a deadly volley

was poured into them, and a second time they retreated, leaving behind one hundred and fifty killed, and five hundred wounded.

A scene of great excitement and confusion followed : Knox, usually so calm and collected, cheered and sprang on top of the parapet, then gave his hand to Mr. Woodbury, who climbed up after him, while Harry M'Crea actually jumped down on the other side, and in another moment would have been in hot pursuit, had not Morgan's strong arm brought him back.

"Well, we must obey," said the Ancient, who, owing to the stiffness of his limbs, was the last to descend from his elevated position ; "They have reasons for not wishing us to give chase, and we must obey."

He had scarcely uttered the words when a shell from the fleet burst over his head, and right in Jane M'Crea's arms, hurling her to the ground with his weight, he fell as dead as Joseph Warren. How the girl herself escaped was a miracle, for twenty men besides Mr. Woodbury, were killed by the explosion, and while she was gazing horror-stricken at the sight, Harry, with his face and breast covered with blood, reeled towards her, and fell on top of the old man.

"Lay low!" shouted Prescott ; "they've got our range, lay low!" and all did as he told them except Jane M'Crea, whose whole heart and soul, at this trying moment, were wrapped up in her brother. "The Ancient has gone, but you must stay," she said, bending over the youth and tearing open the breast of his shirt.

Presently, Knox crawled up and helped examine the wound, which though severe, he did not believe to be mortal. "Thank God I am here," said the young woman, turning her eyes on her betrothed, "Oh, Aaron, I hope you are not hurt?"

"I haven't a scratch," he replied, "but, Jenny, I'd willingly take a ball through me to have you safe in Lexington."

They were still busy staunching the blood, when a soldier arrived from the other end of the line to ask

if there was any powder to be had, and in answer to a question which Knox put to him he gave a short account of how things had gone in that part of the battle-field: "It has been terrible hot work!" he said; "terrible! and the color-bearer of the Second Massachusetts regiment is knocked all to pie! but he stood his ground like a rock, and lies with his head 'pintin' towards the enemy.

This sad intelligence added not a little to the grief which already filled Jane's heart, and she thought of the trial it would be to Mrs. M'Neil. "Poor Billy Smith," she sighed, "there was many a worse fellow than you."

But in order that we may properly appreciate what has happened to the widow's suitor let us go back a little in our narrative and follow him through the first and second attacks of the enemy.

As we remember, Billy went with a part of his regiment to take a position on the extreme left, where owing to the boggy nature of the soil, the British were not able to keep the same solid, compact order which they did in their attack on the main redoubt; nor were they allowed to get so close, but were moved down when they were eighty and a hundred yards off floundering in the slough, with a loss to the patriots of only a score of men.

Our friend was accompanied by Ike Shattuck, and had he been in a state to receive comfort from any human being, it would have been from this poor negro, who seemed as jolly as if he were going to a clam bake.

But Billy heeded not his jokes and could only mutter, "Serves me right; I ought to have gone to Ticonderoga." We regret to add that not a single prayer escaped his lips, and if once or twice he put his hand on the Bible it was merely to satisfy himself that the book had not shifted its position.

"Ike, have you any rum?" he asked, as soon as they halted and faced the point where the enemy was expected to appear.

"Not a drop," was the response, at which Mr. Smith groaned, for his tongue was shrivelled up like a man who is dying with fever, and no wonder, for the June sun was pouring down on his hairless scalp with a fierceness indescribable.

But providence had an eye on him, and was guiding every step he took, every movement he made.

The first advance of the British he hardly saw at all, owing to a film which spread over his vision ; but what caused the film we cannot imagine, unless it was a combination of smoke and nervous exhaustion. But he heard the volley and the shrieks and the cheers, and before the sound died away he felt his legs moving, then presently to his horror down, down he went, lower and lower into what seemed an unfathomable depth, nor did the motion cease until he found himself up to his waist in mud. It happened to be the very worst part of the frog pond, and in his frantic efforts to extricate himself, he thrust the flag-staff so deep into the slimy ooze that he could not pull it out again any more than he could his legs.

While in this awkward predicament he heard Ike Shattuck say that the victory was won ; then Colonel Brewer called out that he had held his ground like a hero.

"Honors come sometimes without grabbing for them," muttered Billy, making another desperate effort to free himself from the slough ; but the alligator boots and the breastplate proved too much for his strength, and sore against his will he was obliged to stand fast. "Well, never mind," he said, "if the d— battle is really over I'm the luckiest fellow ever was born."

But by and by, to his inexpressible dismay, the bayonets of the enemy were again seen approaching, and the revulsion from ecstatic joy to mortal terror was so sudden, and produced such magnetic effects, that the negro could not help laughing, and told him that he had eaten too many berries.

"Well, don't tell on me," groaned Mr. Smith ; "if you hold your tongue about it, I'll keep you in rum as

long as you live," and as he spoke he threw Ike a Spanish dollar.

Just then another terrific volley rang in his ears, the film again spread over his eyes, and in his madness he tore off his coat and unfastened the breastplate. He likewise made another superhuman effort to escape from the mud, and this time he actually succeeded in pulling his left leg out of the boot. But he could do no more, and while this leg lay extended along the surface of the bog grass, the other was buried deeper than ever. Can we wonder then that many of his comrades, seeing his coat tumbled in a heap beside him, and so much of his body out of sight, thought that he had been blown to atoms? But the blood on our friend's throat was not his own blood; it came from poor Ike Shattuck, who after firing three shots, had been killed by a shell.

A period of utter prostration followed this second attack, which as we know ended in the retreat of the British; Billy could scarcely groan. Little by little, however, the cheers of triumph braced his nervous system, and he got so far as to grin and vow that as soon as he had enough money he would buy the frog-pond and erect a house on it—"to remind me," he said, "of the blessed Providence which has guarded me this day."

But alas, his troubles were not yet over. In less than an hour the British infantry—this time without knapsacks and led by Sir Henry Clinton, who had joined Lord Howe with re-inforcements—again appeared in sight, and again the Americans poured a deadly fire into them. But they did not as before break and retreat, but kept steadily on, until they reached the breastwork; then over it they went, Major Pitcairn of the marines leading the way, and, in less time than it takes to relate, were swarming in at every point. In vain did the Massachusetts and New Hampshire men use the butts of their guns; in vain did Morgan's tall Virginians cut and slash with their long knives; of what use were knives and butts of firelocks

against bayonets? Yet for ten minutes, half hidden by dust and smoke, the patriots fought a desperate fight. At length Colonel Prescott gave the word to retreat. What else could he do? The combat was becoming a massacre. Knox sprang towards Jane M'Crea, whom he could distinguish crouching beside her brother. But she warned him off, and throwing her arms around Harry's neck, let her betrothed see that she was determined to remain.

"God protect you, Jenny," he cried, grappling as he spoke with an officer of the marines, who hoped to make him prisoner. But Aaron was strong and active, and shaking off his antagonist, still tried to reach her. But when he looked to the spot where he had last seen Jane, she was gone. He called her name as loud as he could, but his voice was lost in the din, and in another moment he was carried away by his comrades, who were rushing pell-mell out of the sally-port in rear of the fort. Many were bayoneted before they could escape, but Knox was fortunate enough to get off safe and sound, nor was he harmed in crossing Charlestown Neck, where scores of his comrades were killed by the fire of the fleet.

It was while he was passing over this dangerous causeway that he perceived Billy Smith limping along with a gash on his right hand, both feet bare, without any coat, and his shirt torn and bloody. "I have lost my boots, but saved the flag!" he was muttering. And this was true: the grenadier who had pulled him out of the mire in order to take him prisoner, had not been able to hold him more than a couple of minutes, for our friend, finding himself freed from the weight of boots and breastplate, and driven to bay, had really fought like a tiger—fought with tooth and nail and before another grenadier could come up, butted his head with such tremendous force against his antagonist's stomach, that the latter was knocked backwards into the very hole from which he had just emerged; then grasping the flag firmly in his hands Billy beat a retreat, singing as he went, "Praise God from whom all

blessings flow!" Nor should we wonder at his glad feelings; he saw that all his comrades were going back at the double quick towards Cambridge and he was not left behind. What to him were boots and breastplate? Even the old family Bible, which had dropped out of his haversack, gave him not a moment's thought; he had saved the colors of his regiment; that was glory enough, and the smile on his face he attributed to the vision which is passing before him of Mrs. Smith in her wedding gown.

With the retreat of the American force across the isthmus ended the battle of Bunker Hill. Colonel Prescott had lost one hundred and forty-five killed and three hundred and four wounded; while of the British, two hundred and twenty-six lay dead in and around the redoubt and eight hundred and twenty-eight were wounded. Well was it said, "By this rule the Americans will put the whole army into the grave or hospitals in three or four nights' work and one hour's fire in each morning."*

CHAPTER XXII.

"**I** HAVE something important to tell you," said Nanny, the Indian woman, to her young mistress the morning of the battle of Bunker Hill, and about an hour after Helen had seen Count von Meyer. "My suspicions are confirmed: I have found out all I want to know about the Count." As she spoke her black eyes twinkled and her usually stolid countenance beamed with animation.

"Then he is really a deceiver?" said the girl, clasping her hands, "and I have been his dupe?"

"Yes he is a liar and a hypocrite; but he has made a fool of me as well as you, for when I used to hear him praising your beauty, I hoped that he was in earnest and rejoiced to think that he was falling in love. But

* Observations on late battle of Charlestown. London, August 1775. Dawson I. p. 64.

although folks say that he is indeed a rich nobleman, I don't believe any body knows who he really is."

"But of one thing I am now convinced, without asking the opinion of others, and it is that he is deep, bold and cruel." At this Helen thought of Jane M'Crea and bitterly regretted her trip to Lexington. "Alas!" she sighed, "what may not already have happened to the American girl! the count will not tell me if he has seen her; I fear something evil has happened."

Then in an anxious tone, "but go on," she said, "tell me, Nanny, exactly what you have discovered."

"Well, I heard the count say this morning to Major Pitcairn of the marines that the prettiest girl in the whole world was a young rebel, who lives not far from here, and that he would give a thousand pounds to capture her; then he went on to talk about women in a way that I can't repeat to you: but when I heard him I thanked the Lord that you were not going to be his wife."

"Aye, thank the Lord!" murmured Helen.

"Well, after saying all kinds of vulgar things, he began to talk about my people, the Indians; and declared that he was glad they were going to be used against the Americans, and when the major got up to leave Count von Meyer asked him to drink success to the tomahawk."

"Oh horrible!" groaned Helen.

"Well, not if it's brave against brave, scalps must be taken sometimes; but I confess I'd rather not have women and children harmed. But to come back to the count, as soon as Major Pitcairn left the room I declared to him that I was tired of being so long away from my tribe, that I did not like you any more and that I wanted to go away; and then, what do you think he did? He grasped my hand and put more gold in it than I can count: 'tis in my pocket at this moment, and he said that he was going soon to visit the Indians in northern New York, and that I might accompany him; and I promised I would, ha, ha! am I not cunning? He threw dust in our eyes; and I'll throw dust in his."

"Oh the cruel wretch!" murmured Helen, "how came I ever to put faith in him?"

"Well now, child, be wise; be cunning like me your old nurse, who has followed you from your distant home in Canada, and means to stay with you to the end. Don't refuse any help he has promised to give your brother; he has great influence, so better not let him see that you know what his real character is. Pretend that you believe he is a saint; depend on it, my way is the best to get along in the world."

"I will take your advice," returned Helen, after a pause, "not, however, in order to benefit David, who if he be alive must be ill, or wounded, for no letter has yet come from him; but in order to learn more of Count von Meyer's plans and thus, perhaps, save the American girl from falling into his clutches."

During the time they were thus conversing, the drums were beating, the cannon of the fleet booming, the artillery and infantry hurrying along the street, and the people were rushing to the housetops to see what was going on.

"There is certainly to be a battle," said Helen, after gazing out of the window a moment; "and I must hasten to the roof too."

With this, Nanny accompanied her to the top of the house, where despite a broiling sun, Helen remained for several hours watching through a spy-glass the important events going on. She saw the troops gathering at the long wharf, the ships and floating-batteries hurling shot and shell on the redoubt, which the Americans had so suddenly built on Charlestown heights, and when she descried two officers mount the parapet of the fort and stand there boldly defying death, she could not restrain her admiration, nor did she care for the frowns of the tories who were standing by her. At length the heat became so intense that she withdrew to her apartment, leaving Nanny on the roof, who promised to keep a good look-out and let her know as soon as the conflict was decided.

But Helen was unable to read; her thoughts flew

from the page to the fort which she had seen on Bunker Hill, and she wondered if the youth whom she had once met in the forest might be among its brave defenders. Long and anxiously the hours passed : and at one time when the firing ceased, she believed the battle was over. But towards noon it began again with greater fury and continued until four o'clock, when loud cheers from the tories, and Nanny's jubilant voice announced that the cross of Saint George was planted on the rebel redoubt.

Yet the length of time which the struggle had lasted took many by surprise.

"Boston is safe, but the Yankees are stubborn dogs," said one. "Verily I did not believe undrilled peasants would stand for a moment against our troops," said another. And so with various comments on the fight, and hearty congratulations on the result, the tories went back to their hearth-stones, breathing more freely than in the morning, yet not without forebodings that the blood which had been shed would only intensify the spirit of Independence.

Helen Jones of course rejoiced at the victory, and accompanied by Nanny, sallied forth to welcome the returning regiments. "Would that David had been with them to-day !" she said : "I'm sure he would have distinguished himself, and I should have given him his father's decorations." And when in a little while she saw the infantry march past, with faces smeared with dust and powder, with banners torn, but all keeping step to the inspiring music, she thought as she had done before, that a soldier's life was the most glorious in the world.

But when the troops had gone by, another and very different spectacle presented itself to her view : it was a band of prisoners, many of them wounded and scarcely able to walk, forced along by a guard of marines, and jeered by the crowd. "Who knows?" thought Helen, "among these rebels may be the one who so often comes to my mind." Then with anxious eyes she gazed into every prisoner's face. Suddenly she rushed from Nanny's side, and before the guard could prevent her, was

bending over a litter on which lay the very youth whom she had been thinking of a moment before.

Jane M'Crea, pale, and with eyes cast upon the ground, did not observe her until Harry uttered a cry of pain; then looking up she beheld David's image.

"Oh, we have met at last!" she said, throwing her arms around Helen's neck; "thank God we have met at last!" But before Helen could recover from the surprise which this greeting caused her, the wounded soldier raised himself on his elbow and pushed her away.

"No, no, begone!" he said, "I do not want to see your face."

"Oh brother how can you be so unkind?" whispered Jane, bending over him; "let me keep David's sister, let me have her to love."

"As you wish," he groaned, falling back and putting his hand over his eyes. "I deserve all I suffer; let her follow me." Then in a low voice Jane told Helen Jones that she would reveal to her by-and-by who she was, but that with so many staring at them, it would be better for the present to remain silent.

And no doubt this was the wisest thing to do, for many who knew Helen had already been scandalized by the embrace which the American girl had given her, and several—among whom were the tories, who had heard her that morning express admiration for the two rebels whom she had seen expose themselves on the parapet of the fort—hinted that she might be an enemy in disguise.

Stung to the quick by such an accusation, Helen turned to the nearest of them and pointing her finger at him, exclaimed, "had I been a man I would not have watched the struggle from the top of a house; I'd have been with these brave marines fighting for my king."

"Aye, so you would," added Nanny, who had raised her hand to box the impudent tory's ears, and would have done it, but for the crowd who hustled her away. She kept as near as possible, however, to her mistress, and at length was able to join her again at the door of

the jail, into which the prisoners, wounded and unwounded, were crowded.

Helen Jones went with them into their miserable quarters, declaring that such treatment was barbarous; "but I will soon have you removed," she said, in an affectionate tone to Harry M'Crea. "If I have any influence, it shall be exerted in your behalf."

With this she left him rather hastily, blushing and half vexed with herself for having fallen so deeply in love. "I have met him but twice," she murmured, "and he is an enemy; what else do I know about him? Yet already I feel as if I knew him well; aye! there is a mysterious tie between us." She likewise wondered who the young woman was that had embraced her, and what secret she was going to reveal? But other thoughts besides these pressed upon her as she hastened along the street; "How will Count von Meyer receive me?" she asked herself. "Did he not observe how coldly I behaved towards him the other day, after he had told me that the savages were going to be used against the Americans? And this very morning I hardly noticed him when he addressed me; I even shut the window in his face." But sympathy for Harry M'Crea spurred her on her errand of mercy, and she resolved to follow Nanny's advice, and not give the Hessian any more reason for suspecting that she read his black heart.

Count von Meyer, as she entered his room, put on his mildest expression, nothing but the glittering eye showed the tiger within him, and it required an effort on Helen's part not to break out in indignant tones at such hypocrisy. But she restrained her feelings admirably, and the officer was puzzled by her calm, frank look which reminded him of the day when he had first taken her into his confidence.

"She is as artful as I am," he said to himself, "I wonder what she wants?"

"You have come, no doubt, fair lady, to tell me of the victory?" he remarked, at the same time gently taking her hand and conducting her to the sofa.

"Yes, we have driven the Americans from Bunker Hill, and taken many prisoners," answered Helen, "and 'tis on behalf of one of them that I am here; you have it in your power to render me a great service."

"Speak and it shall be done," returned the count. "I have power; I never failed in anything; do you doubt it?"

Unable to repress a shudder at the strange look which he fixed upon her as he uttered these words, she went on in a tone less firm than at first to plead for Harry M'Crea. "He is wounded," she said, "and if left in the wretched prison where he is, may die! Oh take him away from it if you can?"

"Consider him already as surrounded by every comfort which Boston can give," said the count, then with a faint smile, "but how comes it that you are more interested in him than in the other captives?"

Briefly Helen now went on to relate the circumstance of her meeting with the youth in the wilderness, and how he escorted her to the British lines, and so evident was it to the deep soul-searching being listening to her, that she was telling what was true that he more than once waved his hand for her to stop—"I care not to hear more," he said, "you are what I believed from the first, a noble generous-hearted girl—enough."

A few minutes later the count was alone in his chamber which rang with a wild, horrible laugh; "I will show her," he said, "that I have power, and may it teach her the folly of breaking with me. My wrath is not to be despised; no, no she has gone too far to stop; she must help me to the very end, or woe to her."

In the mean while Helen Jones was on her way back to the prison, which she found strictly guarded, and it was not without some trouble that she gained admittance. When she entered Jane M'Crea was seated on the floor beside Harry, but at once rose and eagerly grasping her hand, asked if she had been successful.

"I have," replied Helen; "in a little while you and

this wounded soldier will be removed to better quarters; is he your brother?" and in the tone of her voice there was a slight uneasiness.

"Yes, my brother; but since you have so much influence can you not have all that are wounded taken away from this miserable place?"

"I will try. But now tell me why you kissed me so affectionately when we first met? you do not even know my name."

"Are you not Helen Jones?"

"I am," answered Helen, profoundly astonished.

"I used to know your twin brother," pursued Jane, vainly endeavoring to master her feelings; "who could mistake the likeness between you?"

"So you knew David?" and as Helen spoke she threw her arms around Jane's neck.

"Yes, I knew him." Then after a pause, during which Jane sobbed, nor could Helen restrain her tears: "did you not come to Lexington a few weeks ago with a message for me from an officer on General Gage's staff?"

"I did; but why do you weep? what secret trouble do you hide from me? where is David? Tell me before Count von Meyer comes; I do not want him to hear what you say."

"Count von Meyer!" exclaimed Jane, pressing her hand to her brow, "is he coming?"

"Yes, and are you not thankful to have his assistance? why you tremble! Is he what I have lately suspected—an artful deceiver? Has he wronged you in any way?"

"He is my blackest horror," replied Jane, "and when he arrives stay by me; I have a dread of him which is beyond tongue to express."

"Well, I will keep a sharp eye on him, and warn you of all that he says and does; I have the means to learn his most secret plans, so fear not. But now before he comes to interrupt us, tell me all you know about David?"

"He lived in Lexington where my home is," an-

swered Jane in a voice almost inaudible from grief, and agitation. "I was his betrothed."

"And now where is he? Oh I beg you conceal nothing."

"He is dead!" and as Jane spoke she buried her face in her hands, while Helen fell speechless in the arms of Nanny. During the next quarter of an hour it were difficult to say who suffered the most, Helen, Jane or Harry M'Crea; perhaps it was Harry, for he knew, alas too well, the cause of their bitter grief: but for him how different might have been the meeting between Jane and David's sister! In what glad tones they would have conversed about the absent youth! With what impatience they would have looked forward to the day when they should meet him! But now they would never see him again.

Helen Jones was still overcome by the sad news when the door of the jail opened and Count von Meyer entered.

"Let us be calm," whispered Jane, hurriedly; "the bad man is come!"

But it was not so easy for her friend to control her feelings. She had not Jane's strength of will, and when the Hessian approached she was still sobbing as if her heart would break. But at first he seemed not to notice her; his eyes were riveted on Jane. "War is truly barbarous," he began, artfully concealing his surprise at this unexpected meeting, and making believe that he thought the girl's tears were caused by the scene of misery around her. Then clasping his hands and turning his eyes on Harry M'Crea: "but, alas, I fear this is only the beginning of what you poor fellows will have to suffer. In me, however, you shall find a friend."

It would be impossible to describe Jane M'Crea's thoughts as he spoke these words. Would it not be the height of folly to manifest her loathing for him, now that he had, not only herself, but her brother in his power? Why not let him for a short while enjoy the delusion that by being kind to Harry, he might at last bend her to his will? Was it not the hope of be-

ing able to do so that now made him look so compassionately on the youth?

"Oh, yes, for brother's sake I will endure much, I will go as far as honor lets me," she said to herself.

Count von Meyer saw his advantage, and, bending over the litter said a few cheerful words to Harry, telling him that he should not pass another hour in jail, then went on to talk about the prison ship which was going to be fitted out, "and these unhappy men," he said, "will be penned up in her and smothered and treated worse than dogs. But you shall not suffer such a fate."

"Well, we have shown King George that we know how to fight," said Jane, looking proudly at him; "we will prove that we can endure without a murmur whatever cruelties he is preparing for us."

"But I repeat, this wounded soldier shall not be treated like his comrades; and if I save him from such a fate you will be grateful to me?"

"I will give you the best thanks of my heart," replied Jane—"what more can I give?"

"What more?" he whispered, "oh be not a fool to talk thus; your brother is to be taken out of this miserable place through my influence; beware that he does not die aboard the Scorpion."

Jane M'Crea did not answer this threat even with a whisper—and when a few minutes afterwards Harry was carried away in the litter, she looked so broken-hearted and submissive that the monster flattered himself he had made her his willing victim at last.

CHAPTER XXIII.

WHEN Jane M'Crea awoke from a short and troubled sleep on the morning after the battle of Bunker Hill, and found herself in a strange room, she was for a moment bewildered, and as the memory of the scenes she had witnessed the day before rushed upon her, she wondered if it might not be all a dream.

But when her eyes turned towards her brother's couch, which was near the sofa where she was lying, she started up and realized, alas, that it was truth, stern truth.

"This time yesterday," she sighed, "when the sun was flashing his rays across the horizon, how little I imagined what I should see before it set! 'Tis well that we are blind to the future! Josiah Woodbury is dead and I am here a prisoner with Harry, and destined—but oh, God avert it!—to go through scenes more terrible than any I have gone through in the past."

Presently, while she was on her knees, during her morning devotions, she was interrupted by a knock on the door, and in another moment Helen Jones entered followed by the Indian woman.

"I hope he passed a quiet night?" whispered the former, advancing on tiptoe to Harry's bedside.

"He did not fall asleep till one o'clock," answered Jane, "and then I took a little rest myself. But I am happy to say that the surgeon whom Count von Meyer sent here, declared that the wound is not dangerous and that before many weeks he will be up and about again."

"Oh how glad I am!" continued Helen, "I'd have waited with you until the surgeon came, only that I wanted to have the other prisoners supplied with water—the poor fellows were perishing with thirst; and I succeeded, thanks to the Count, who for reasons deep and dark, is playing the good Samaritan. But, hush! your brother is awake!" Then in a glad tone and blushing as she addressed the youth, whose eyes were turned upon her, "I am sorry," she said, "to have disturbed your repose, but rejoice to see that you are not angry with me this morning: since we parted a few weeks ago I have learnt that my brother is dead, but have found his betrothed, and she is your sister; so I am going to love her dearly and you must not frown at me any more."

"No, no, I will not," said Harry faintly, and in a sad tone; then stealing her hand which was resting on

the pillow, "you will I know be a kind and gentle nurse; pardon my rudeness to you yesterday."

"Of course I do," returned Helen, whose heart was fluttering with sweet emotion.

Here there was a pause during which Harry M'Crea's heart fluttered too, and if somebody could only have said, "David is alive," how quickly he would have declared his secret love! But the blood which was on his hands made him mute, and oh how bitterly he cursed the day when he had gone with Ethan Allen to Ticonderoga!

They were still gazing silently on each other when the Indian woman entered and informed Jane M'Crea that Count von Meyer was below and wanted to see her. "He is very anxious for an interview," she said, "and 'tween us, although I hate the man, I think if I were you I'd gratify him; for if he takes a dislike to you, miss, he'll have your brother sent aboard the prison ship just as sure as I'm standing here."

"Yes, better go down and see what he wants," added Helen, "I can't believe that he will dare insult you."

"Insult Jenny? what do you mean? who is this man you are talking of?" cried Harry, rising up, his eyes flashing with excitement.

"Pray be calm," returned Jane, drawing away from the bed-side, lest he should grasp her and not let her go: "I will brave him once more and save you if I can from the fate of the other prisoners." With this she hastened out of the chamber.

It were impossible to describe how Jane M'Crea felt, as she approached the parlor on the first story where the count was waiting for her: she remembered his words on the nineteenth of April, and the strange presentiment which had come over her: she remembered a terrifying dream which she had had, and her meeting with him on the Pine Knoll. But pale and troubled as she was, the short prayer which she said while her hand rested on the knob of the door gave her courage, and with a calm, dignified air she entered the room.

Count von Meyer, who was dressed in full uniform, assumed an expression of concern as she appeared before him, and having offered her a chair eagerly inquired about her brother. "He is as well as can be expected so soon after receiving his wound," replied Jane.

"That is more than can be said of those who are in the jail," rejoined the count, "I went there an hour ago and declare to you that they will hardly suffer more when they get aboard the Scorpion."

As he mentioned the prison-ship he watched her face with his keenest eye and fancied that he read something like scorn in it."

"We are all in God's hands and must bear without murmuring whatever falls to our lot," returned Jane. "Of one thing I am certain, all that General Gage can do, will never crush out of those brave men's hearts the spirit of freemen."

"This is a point about which we will not dispute," he continued. "I admit that they are heroes. But, Miss M'Crea, do you not see a Providence in what has happened? Who would have thought a week ago, that to-day you would be in Boston, a guardian angel to assist your unhappy countrymen? For you can assist them through me; perhaps save them from a fate worse than death."

"Then do assist them, and I will try to forgive and forget the past."

"Will you accept this bracelet from me?" asked the count, a malignant fire darting from his eyes. "Will you sail out to sea with me for a few days? Say yes, and prove that you really love your wounded brother."

"No! Harry would rather perish on the Scorpion than have me in your power," exclaimed Jane, letting the beautiful string of pearls drop at her feet.

"In my power!" laughed the monster, seizing her by the throat and pushing her violently back against the wall; "you are there already; I will bend your foolish innocence to my will."

For a moment one might have thought that he was

going to master her, for his grip was tight and Jane had been completely surprised by the suddenness of the attack. But she was a strong and active girl, and moreover he had only one arm that he could use against her ; so with a tremendous effort she sprang from him and before he could overtake her, was out of the room.

"The wretch! what has he done?" cried Helen Jones, when her friend re-appeared, bearing on her throat the marks of the Hessian's nails ; at the same time Harry made a desperate but vain attempt to rise from the couch.

Jane saw his excitement and dreading the effect it might have upon him in his feeble state, drew Helen aside and whispered, "I must be gone ; I cannot stay another hour ; God help my poor brother ! But you are here and will remain with him as long as possible."

"Aye, that I will," returned the other ; "I will be all that a sister could be to him. But you are trembling and there is blood on your throat, tell me what has the brute done? All powerful as he is at headquarters, he shall not tyrannize over you."

In a few words Jane related what had occurred in the parlor below, then again declared that she must leave the city without delay : "If I remain I am ruined," she said : "nor is there a moment to lose, even now the wretch may be taking means to prevent my escape ; see, yonder he goes !"

Here she pointed out of the window, and sure enough there was Count von Meyer walking rapidly down the street.

"Oh, idiot that I was ever to put faith in him !" said Helen, "aye, he is on his way to headquarters ; we must hasten and get there before him : How 'twill enrage him if he finds that you have a pass to cross the lines !"

With this Jane gave her brother a kiss, breathed a short prayer over his pillow, then without answering his urgent appeal, to tell what was the matter, followed Helen Jones out of the room.

But before they got to the street Helen clapped

her hands and declared that she had thought of a plan, which might thwart Count von Meyer and perhaps stop him short in his career of villainy: "yes, I have a secret which if I divulged would bring the count into disgrace: what would General Gage say, if I told him that this officer who stands so high in his favor, and who they say is to command all the Hessians that are coming over here next spring, had once visited Lexington in disguise?"

"How could you prove it?" said Jane, shaking her head, "Your word would not weigh against his, and 'twould only increase his revenge on poor Harry. Besides, he no doubt kept his eyes wide open as he passed through our camp, and in order to provide against contingencies, must have noted down what he saw; so that if you were to reveal his secret visit to Lexington, far from denying it, he would be able to take credit on himself for having been a successful spy."

Helen did not pursue the subject further, for she remembered her own sketch of one of the American earthworks, which she had given to the count on her return from her visit to Buckman's tavern, and as she recalled the eagerness with which he had accepted it, she realized more than ever what a far-seeing plotter he was.

It was with no little anxiety that she led her friend up the steps of the building in which was the office of General Gage's adjutant, for the count might have already arrived and used his influence to have Jane M'Crea arrested; but she was fully determined, if such was the case, to denounce him openly in the presence of everybody, and then if her word was not believed, to share Jane's fate, whatever it might be.

Imagine then her astonishment when they entered the large hall, to see Count von Meyer advancing towards them, holding up before their eyes a slip of paper.

"Take this," he said, placing himself in front of Jane M'Crea, "'Twill pass you across the lines; go

home, and do not fear that I shall forget you ; we will meet again."

His expression alone would have been enough to terrify the young woman, but to have him actually give her the very permit which she had come to procure, struck her as something singularly ominous, and for a moment she hesitated to touch the paper. But with a malicious leer he pressed it upon her, then motioned her to depart. Helen Jones would not have left his presence so willingly as her friend, but would have stopped and upbraided him for his brutal conduct towards the latter, had not his imperative voice silenced her, and with a look of smothered anger she withdrew, holding fast to Jane M'Crea. Softly as a cat would tread, and the very instant their backs were turned, the Hessian glided up to Harry's sister, then, after dropping something in her pocket, whispered—"we will meet again."

"Begone!" cried Jane, turning wildly round upon him; but the words had no more than left her lips when he was already disappearing through a side door in the passageway, and by the time she reached the street, she could hear his demoniac laugh ringing in a distant part of the building.

CHAPTER XXIV.

BILLY Smith had gone through a great deal since the month of April and his spirits had been sorely tried ; but now things seemed to be ripe for the accomplishment of his desires. No longer a coward even in Jane M'Crea's eyes, why should he keep Mrs. M'Neil waiting any longer? "She not only knows that I'm a hero, but wants to prove it by handing over herself and the five acres of land to my care. What a different woman she is from the day before the battle of Lexington, when she snubbed me for wanting to marry her?"

Such were his thoughts as he entered his native village at about nine o'clock in the evening of June the eighteenth ; and as he approached the log cabin, where he meant to strike a light and arrange his garments a little before appearing in the Ordinary, he chuckled and said, " I wonder if she expects me ? "

In another moment he was at the cabin door and was about to raise the latch when his jaw fell and his eyebrows went up ever so high. But his astonishment quickly passed away : " Ha, ha ! " he said, with the broadest and jolliest of grins, " Ha, ha, I know what's the matter. Well, by jingo 'twill be something more than a surprise, 'twill be a Resurrection ! She's been told that I was killed and has gone and tied half a mile of crape on my door ; ha ! ha ! ha ! " Then after musing a moment, " yes, " he continued, " that's what I'll do ; I'll wrap a sheet around me and make believe I've come back from 'tother world ; that'll prove what a faithful lover I am. "

Less than a quarter of an hour afterwards a white object might have been seen gliding towards the side entrance of the tavern, in the parlor of which he did not doubt that he would find the good woman weeping, and trying to get a little comfort out of her Bible, and as he drew near he thanked the Lord that there were no curs around to bark and give the alarm.

But not only was his step unheralded by the faintest sound, what was more fortunate still, the door was not quite shut and he was able to peep into the room without being discovered ; but as soon as he looked in his jaw fell even lower than before, while his expression became anything but jolly.

His bitter disappointment, however, lasted only a moment ; then his grin returned and he could hardly keep from bursting into a roar. " Well, well, she's a philosopher, " he said, " sipping punch and playing backgammon, one hand against 'tother, is better than crying over me. What a splendid woman she is ! never saw her look so well "

Presently Mrs. M'Neil began to talk aloud to her-

self; "well, whatever folks may say about Billy Smith, he always stood up for my punch."

"And—he—always—will," broke in a lugubrious voice.

It was worth a fortune to see the good woman's expression as these words echoed through the apartment. She was no coward; darkness—graveyards, nothing had ever yet unnerved her; but to hear the voice of her departed lover sent the blood to her heart with a rush, her face turned ghastly white, down went the dice in all directions, while Billy almost bit his tongue off in his effort not to laugh. Then as she was gazing around her in horror, he slowly pushed open the door and stood upon the threshold. But he had scarcely done so, when she uttered a shriek, and before he could throw off the sheet to undeceive her, fell senseless on the floor.

"By jingo, I went too far," he exclaimed, springing into the room, then throwing himself on his knees he tried to feel her pulse; but in his agitation he could not find it and he cried out, "good Lord, if she don't come to what'll I do?" Then he rubbed her hands, and slapped them, and groaned, and finally poured a tumbler of punch over her face and neck.

This last method to revive the dame proved successful; the tiny fragrant rills which went meandering over her body caused her to open her eyes, and the instant Billy saw the old familiar squint he shouted, "glory Hallelujah! Not dead yet!"

"No, but—but, who are you? Billy Smith?" said Mrs. M'Neil in a faint voice and looking quite bewildered.

"Yes, my swan, I'm Billy Smith come to claim his adored."

"Well, perseverance must be rewarded; I'm your n," she murmured, then pressing her hand to her brow: "but really I never was took in this way afore; you came on me so unexpected. Jake the blacksmith, who arrived home last night, woke the whole town up and told us that there had been a great battle and swore

he'd seen you lying near Ike Shattuck, blown into twenty pieces. Oh, I'll never believe Jake again."

"Well, I was mighty close to death," said Billy, who was still on his knees, chafing the widow's right hand in order to restore the circulation—"and at one time I got so near the enemy's cannon that the powder singed all my hair off."

"Why, sure enough, so it did! what a providential escape! Oh, dear Mr. Smith, the Lord had his eye on you. How thankful you ought to be!"

"Well, I hope nobody else watched me very close," said Billy to himself, then raising his voice, "I saved the flag, Mrs. M'Neil, and killed a grenadier!"

"Yes, Jake said that as long as he observed you alive you carried the colors like a hero; but now tell me if you know anything about Jenny. She and the Ancient went off together to see the fight, and the blacksmith declares that she was on Bunker Hill; is it true?"

Before answering he helped her rise from the floor, then having led her to the sofa, went on to relate how the girl had been with them all through the battle, how she had been taken prisoner and carried to Boston with her brother, who was wounded; and then he told how she had been set free and might be expected any moment with Knox: "for I am sorry to say," he added "that Josiah Woodbury was killed on Bunker Hill, and Jenny and the captain were to start from camp with his body about half an hour after I did." Then after pausing long enough for his betrothed to sigh, "poor old Woodbury!" "I'd have accompanied them," he continued, "only that I wanted to have a private interview with you: popping the question isn't a thing a man likes to do afore other folks. But now that you have accepted me I'm glory all over and I vow that the eighteenth of June shall ever be for me a day of thanksgiving."

"And let us celebrate it at once," said Mrs. M'Neil, "go to the cupboard and get another tumbler."

"Nay, my swan, let me make the punch in one

glass and so begin our partnership on the spot: we'll drink to the union of Smith and M'Neil—and you can take the first sip."

She smiled and let him have his way, then when they had drained the glass of its last drop, she burst into a hearty laugh, for Billy smacked his lips so loud that it sounded like the report of a pistol.

"Now tell me how is the farm getting on?" he inquired, after she had done laughing. "I suppose corn isn't likely to thrive when so many of us are off to the war?"

"I've stopped bothering my head about corn," replied the dame. "I'm not going to work land that doesn't belong to me any more: the tavern and five acres are sold."

"Sold!" exclaimed Billy, drawing back a step, while his throat all at once became as parched as a Cape Cod sand-hill.

"Yes, I've concluded to move away from this part of the country and settle in New York."

It took several minutes for her betrothed to recover from the shock which this unexpected piece of news had given him; then after drawing a long breath, "well, I can't say," he continued, "that it's a bad move. There's plenty of rich land in the Mohawk Valley; but I wish I could accompany you when you go to choose the farm, for you know that I've a keen eye for detecting sand and stones. How soon are you going?"

"I'm only waiting for Jenny; 'tis on her account I want to move."

"Well really, the more I think of it the better I like the idea," pursued Billy, "Lexington is too near Boston, and General Gage might come here some day and destroy the crops, perhaps burn the village: but hark! There they are!" As he spoke he ran to the door and opened it just as Jane M'Crea's hand was on the latch. "Go help Aaron," was all the girl said to him as she entered the room, then throwing her arms around Mrs. M'Neil's neck, she burst into tears.

"Billy has told me all about it," said the dame: "but

you mustn't take it so hard : Mr. Woodbury was very old and couldn't have worried through many more years ; but for you he'd not have lived as long as he did."

"Thank God I made his last days happy !" sobbed Jane, " I never spoke a cross word to him."

"That's more than I can say," rejoined the widow, "for he used to be dropping bits of calamus root here, there and everywhere, and once I got so angry with him about it, that I declared that he'd have to go find another home ; you see everybody hasn't your patience."

Here Billy was heard calling for light, and at once Jane went to the door with the candle, while Mrs. M'Neil drew the chairs out of the way, then hastened up-stairs to get a pillow.

A few minutes later the remains of Josiah Woodbury were lying on the sofa, his hands crossed on his breast, and he looked so natural that you might have thought he was only asleep. In fact the widow declared that he was handsomer than when he was alive ; the face had lost its weather-beaten look, and there was an expression of calm joy upon it, which made Jane think of the dream which the old man had related to her, and she did not doubt that he had already joined his long lost Phebe in the Island of the Blest.

"I'll spare no expense to have a nice tomb-stone put over him," said Mrs. M'Neil, after gazing a moment at the corpse ; "it shall be the finest in the whole graveyard."

"He will not need any," said Jane "I am going to bury him with Phebe Reed, in the crevice of a rock ; a sweet retired spot, where he has often told me that he wanted to lie."

"In a rock !" exclaimed the dame, "well, I declare ! The Ancient was an odd fish and, child, you've took after him."

"He could not have a better resting-place," said Jane ; "only last autumn people talked about cutting a road through the graveyard ; and besides, what does a tombstone amount to ? 'Tis soon hidden by woods,

and when the dead man's folks move away, or die themselves, who cares to read the epitaph?"

"Well, they once talked of quarrying that 'ere rock," put in Billy Smith, lifting his sandy eyebrows, and looking as if he had delivered himself of a very important piece of information.

"I know they did," said Jane; "but I saved up enough money to buy it; 'tis the only property I own. Effingham Leech made me pay four times what it's worth; but cute as he is, he couldn't get me to tell why I wanted it. If he had known the truth he would have raised the price, for I was determined to own the rock."

"Oh the mean fellow!" exclaimed Mrs. M'Neil, "just like him; guess he calculated there was some of Captain Kidd's gold hid there."

"Perhaps he did, for even after he had sold it, he used to watch me and try and find out why I went there so often. But I never would tell."

"Ha! ha! good for you!" cried the dame, rubbing her hands and quite forgetting that there was a corpse in the room; "this same Leech now owns Buckman's tavern; but he was awful sulky yesterday 'cause he couldn't buy it for nothing. He stuck his knife into the wainscotting and swore that 'twas all decayed; then dug up half the garden and said there wasn't an inch of good soil in it; oh I did feel like cracking a broomstick over his head."

"So the old 'cuss' has bought this property, eh?" said Billy Smith, who was now standing with his back to the widow, while his knife was hard at work carving something on the door.

"Yes; but, I say, what are you doing? Don't leave any foolish marks in the room; if they were'n't there yesterday Leech'll find it out and make me pay damages."

"June 18, 1775—do you call those foolish marks?" returned Mr. Smith.

"I may die afore the wedding day," said the widow, winking at the girl; at which remark the latter

pressed her hand and asked if she and Billy Smith were engaged to be married.

"Yes, I promised to take him if he behaved like a hero," returned Mrs. M'Neil, "and I have kept my word."

Half an hour later there was nobody in the parlor except Jane M'Crea, who was to watch by the corpse till one o'clock, when Knox was coming to relieve her. It was the first time she had ever performed such a duty, but so conscious was she that she had been kind and generous to the old man when he was alive that she felt no dread of being alone with the silent figure stretched upon the sofa.

"If he were to speak," she said, "'twould be only words of affection; his spirit may be hovering near me at this very moment; perhaps he is telling Phebe who I am."

CHAPTER XXV.

PUNCTUALLY at one o'clock in the morning Aaron came to relieve his betrothed, whom he found on her knees beside the sofa. She rose as he approached, and there was something strangely touching in the way she threw her arms round his neck and held him a moment to her breast.

"Jenny," he said, "'twas wrong to let you keep watch so long; grief and anxiety have taken much of your life away; I will be glad when you are far from here; new faces, new scenes will make you your old self again."

"I do not want to go farther than Cambridge," returned the girl; "you are there, and with you my spirit is less disturbed than anywhere else; would that you were always near me!"

"Since the battle you are more precious than ever," said Knox, "oh you cannot tell what I suffered after I lost sight of you in the redoubt! how fortunate you were to get your freedom so soon!"

"Fortunate," murmured Jane, then after a pause, "well, perhaps I was, yet since my return home I am again haunted by a dark presentiment which I hoped had left me forever. When you entered the room I was praying God to let me have peace of mind—to let me forget Count von Meyer."

"Oh Jenny, your fear of that man is not worthy of you," rejoined Knox. "Are there not thousands of arms to protect you against him? Doubtless he is an unprincipled mercenary, but after all he must be a stupid fellow and without influence, or he would not have let you get out of Boston. You were more in his power there than you will ever be again."

To this she made no response, but trembling withdrew to her bedroom without letting him know that it was the Hessian himself who had given her the pass to cross the lines.

The sleep, which she needed so much soon came to her weary eyes and lasted unbroken until morning.

She was not yet awake when Mrs. M'Neil entered her chamber to bring her another gown and take away the old one which had got very much soiled. On tip-toe the good woman approached the bedside, and for a moment watched the pale face lying on the pillow, and when she saw what the sleeper clasped in one of her hands, "Aye," she said, "I know what that is; night as well as day she holds fast to David's image; pity she can't forget him!" Then turning away she began to fumble in the pockets of the soiled garment, which hung on a peg close by, to see if there might be anything in them which ought to be taken out before carrying it off to the wash.

"Well, well, as I live," she said, in a voice almost loud enough to rouse Jane, "as I live! if the child isn't growing vain! only one day in Boston and yet she has bought a necklace! And what a beauty! Never saw such pearls afore!" But presently she shook her head and looked puzzled: "No, no," continued she, "I can't believe 'twas herself bought it; she's the last person to care about ornaments; it must be a present from Knox. And

yet he hasn't been to Boston since the war began ; but even supposing that he has managed to go there in disguise—which isn't very likely—where did he raise the money to buy such a splendid necklace? His mother is well off, but knows the value of money and would scarcely let him be so extravagant." Here she glided to the mirror and the color of youth came back to her cheeks as she gazed in it: "Humph!" she said, "preachers may preach, and Job and Solomon and the rest of 'em may say what they like, but I'm twenty years better looking with this necklace on. But let's see how it becomes Jenny." With this she stepped to the bedside and tried to pass it over the girl's head. But after a few efforts she gave up the attempt, as to persist in it might rouse the girl from her slumber, then having placed the necklace on the pillow,—she softly left the room.

Jane M'Crea slept on for about a quarter of an hour longer, then opened her eyes and, drawing a deep breath, exclaimed, "home again!" Yes home again, but what things had happened since the last time she had slept in that cosy apartment and seen the morning sunlight shimmering on the whitewashed wall! The Ancient was dead, Harry wounded and a prisoner, and she had felt the clutch of a villain's hand upon her throat, and had heard him say, "we will meet again." No wonder that she turned wearily on her side and groaned as these thoughts rushed upon her; "oh why did I not sleep on and finish my dream?" she said, "'twas so sweet, so sweet!"

Suddenly, with the expression of one who has discovered a serpent near, she started up and clasping her hands, "Oh God," she cried, "he has been here in the night! he is on my track!"

Well it was that just at this moment, when she was struggling with a paroxysm of terror, the widow appeared. "Why, Jenny, are you crazed? Good Lord, what ails you? Speak, speak!" cried the dame, hastening to the bedside.

Without answering, Jane pointed to the necklace lying on the pillow.

"What is there about that pretty thing to scare you?" inquired the dame, picking it up and handing it to her.

"Oh tear it to pieces! Crush it! put it out of my sight!" cried Jane, flinging it to the furthest corner of the room.

"Well, well, well! all that you've gone through has turned your brain at last," sighed Mrs. M'Neil. "I little thought when I placed this necklace near you awhile ago that you'd wake up mad! Oh Jenny, Jenny!"

"What! did you put it there?" cried Jane, with a look of intense relief.

"Why, who else d'you think could take such a liberty? If you are not mad, tell me the cause of your strange behavior."

In a few words Jane now related her meeting with Count von Meyer in Boston (omitting, however, any mention of his dastardly assault), and when she told how he had glided up behind her and whispered, "we will meet again," the widow clenched both fists, and after saying that it must have been at that moment he dropped the necklace into her pocket, vowed that she would claw his eyes out if he ever gave her a chance. "But he'll not follow you to the new country where we are going; persevering as he is, we'll baffle him," she said. Then picking up the necklace, "And now, Jenny, since you won't wear this pretty thing, I will: Lord, won't folks stare next Sabbath!" In vain did the girl implore her to put the pearls into the mortar and crush them to powder; in vain; with the most satisfied air the dame slipped them over her head, then went out of the room declaring that many besides Billy Smith would call her Swan.

But Jane M'Crea was determined that Mrs. M'Neil should not retain them in her possession.

"Let people say what they will, let even Aaron call me superstitious, the sight of them fills me with a dark foreboding and they must be destroyed," she said. Accordingly when she had dressed herself she went to the window and called Billy Smith, whom she heard whis-

ting in his cabin. In less than three minutes the obedient fellow was standing on the threshold of her apartment, scratching his head, and not altogether at his ease. "There was something I didn't like about the tone of her voice just now," he muttered to himself; "I hope Ike Shattuck hasn't come to life."

But the friendly way she greeted him dissipated his fears, and when she congratulated him on having behaved so gallantly on Bunker Hill: "aye," he exclaimed, rising an inch higher in his boots, "aye, I was filled with the spirit of battle, and even if I had wanted to be a coward and run, my legs would have refused to carry me."

"Well now I want you to do something which may try your heart almost as much as 'twas tried the other day," continued the girl, beckoning him to approach nearer.

"Set me any task you like, Miss Jenny, and I'll do it; don't spare me; give me a chance to prove my gratitude."

"Hush! speak not thus; let the past be forgotten," said Jane. Then lowering her tone and looking very serious, "you must know, that Mrs. M'Neil has carried off a pearl necklace which was yesterday secretly dropped into my pocket by a Hessian officer, a villain whom I loath with all my soul. Get it from her at all hazards, then throw it into the fire, destroy it, burn it so that I shall never lay eyes on it again."

"Well, I repeat, anything to please you, but 'twill need all my cuteness to do it, for Mrs. M'Neil knows that they're uncommon beautiful pearls, and won't be likely to take her eyes off 'em. And really they help her good-looks wonderfully, and she's gone to Mrs. Leech's to show herself off, and afore she gets through the exhibition, I guess she'll visit every house in the village. However, what has to be done, has to be done, and they shall be where nobody will find them afore this time to-morrow."

"I thank you ever so much for your good-will," said Jane; "but act not rashly; she will be back for Mr

Woodbury's funeral, which takes place in a couple of hours, and when that is over begin your task." With this she dismissed him to his log cabin, whither he went, shaking his head and saying, "what an odd girl Miss Jenny is!"

The sun was two hours high when Mrs. M'Neil made her appearance in the room where the corpse lay; accompanied by half-a-dozen female acquaintances, who expressed much grief at the death of the Ancient, and showed it by scrutinizing his finger nails, staring into his sunken eyes, and declaring that nothing could keep well such hot weather. Their morbid curiosity and idle remarks displeased Jane M'Crea, who at once made Knox a sign to wrap the blanket round the corpse, and carry it away. The young man did as she desired, and in a few minutes, stretched upon a kind of litter, one end of which was held by Aaron, the other by Billy Smith and followed by Mrs. M'Neil and the girl—the latter carrying a small spade—Josiah Woodbury went to his last resting-place. The village gossips did not care to go; they had seen all they wanted to see, and Jane was glad they remained behind.

It was just the hour to be in the woods; at noon the heat was too great, but now the sunbeams penetrated only here and there the leafy barrier which surrounded the moss-covered rock, and the dew was still sparkling on the rose-bush which grew in the crevice.

"Now, Jenny, if you let me have the spade, I'll dig the grave," said Knox, when he and Smith had laid their burden down.

"No," uttered his betrothed, "I would rather do it; 'tis the last service I can render the old man." With this, she knelt and began gently to loosen the ground around the bush, which she presently lifted from its bed, and placed on one side. Then partly with the spade, partly with the hands, she proceeded to excavate the rich dark soil, and as the worms and ants crawled and wriggled about, she could not help saying to herself, "what a little world I am disturbing with my fingers!"

More than one tear rolled down her cheek, while Mrs. M'Neil frowned and muttered that it was going rather far to turn grave-digger. But Jane did not mind what she said and kept steadily at work, digging down farther and farther into the crevice. At length she stopped and held her breath; she fancied that she had touched a bone. But no; it was only a piece of the rock.

"You must be pretty nigh deep enough," spoke the widow, stooping and peering into the hole, "but I guess you'll hardly find anything of Phebe Reed; she's been dead over fifty years."

Without noticing this remark, the girl continued to dig; but in another moment stopped again, then gazed solemnly up at her betrothed.

"Have you found anything?" exclaimed Mrs. M'Neil, her eyes bursting with curiosity. "Now don't be foolish, where is it? Let us have a look."

Without opening her lips, nor even answering her, Jane drew the earth back over the skull, which, green and honey-combed with age, was certainly not an object to be admired, then made Aaron a sign that the grave was ready.

"Good-bye!" she said, as the old man was placed in his narrow bed; "good-bye! we'll meet again." And so Josiah Woodbury's mortal remains disappeared from view; back went the soil, the worms and the ants; the rose-bush was set in its place again, and before they left the rock, the bees were humming around it as if nothing had happened. We regret to say that Mrs. M'Neil was now in very bad humor; her desire to examine the skull had not been gratified, and as she walked away even the pretty pearls round her neck did not hinder her from muttering that it was the homeliest funeral she had ever attended.

"I could have had a crowd easy enough," she growled, "if you had let me bury him in the churchyard. As it is, we have dropped him into a hole with no more ceremony than if he had been a dead horse."

Suddenly the current of her thoughts was changed

by the conduct of Billy Smith, who had fallen on one knee and with his finger to his lips was gazing at something. "What is it?" Without answering her he began to giggle and while he was giggling a large raccoon might have been seen crawling along the limb of a chestnut tree twenty yards ahead of them. Nor did he cease his whimsical and absurd behavior until they reached the village, when after a tremendous peal of laughter he suddenly became grave as a judge and calling Jane M'Crea aside asked if she had ever seen the animal before. The girl shook her head, at which he whispered, "It's the parson, and Lord, if coons could speak, what a story he'd tell!"

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE evening of the day when Josiah Woodbury was buried, Mr. Smith whispered to Jane M'Crea, as he sat between her and his betrothed in the little parlor next to the bar-room, that he desired to be left alone with the widow. "You want me to get the necklace away from her," he said, "so don't ask any questions; you and cap. go and take a stroll through the village."

The girl felt little disposed for a walk; she would rather have retired to her bedroom and finished the sweet dream of the night before, but Knox, who was going to leave her on the morrow, begged her to stay up a little while longer, so, slipping her arm through his, they sauntered out of the house.

It was indeed a lovely night; on every side you heard the voice of the whippoorwill, while insects, which had been hidden in their holes during the day, were now chirping and making merry. The crickets were romping with the grasshoppers, the millers were chasing the beetles, stopping often to sip the delicious dew and guided in their sports by the light of a myriad of fire-flies. "Oh, what a charming hour this is!" ex-

claimed Aaron, as they strolled along. "How the corn must be growing to-night."

"Yes, I can hear the crackling sound of the leaves as they unfold," said Jane, stopping a moment to listen. "This is the widow Clark's field. I helped to plough it and I think there will not be such a bad crop after all."

"Well, do as much out-door work as you can," pursued Knox; "fresh air and sunshine are very necessary for you."

"Yes, I like ploughing better than spinning, and while you men are off to the war we will raise the corn and wheat for bread and johnny-cakes."

"Good!" exclaimed her betrothed, "for we cannot fight without food; but there is something which we need just as much as bread and which I regret to say you brave women cannot procure for us."

"Pray what is it?"

"Powder. Only for that we should have won the victory the other day."

"I believe we should. Nevertheless, they did not drive us from the hill without a hard fight, and Helen Jones says that since the battle the British have a much higher opinion of us than before."

"Helen Jones!" repeated Aaron, as he caught the name, "Helen Jones! How I long to meet her. And you say that she is like David?"

"The very image. She has his ways too, in everything; I see it even in the art with which she adorns herself. You remember I once called David a peacock because he admired gaudy colors and wanted me to wear flowers in my hair, and ear-rings, and I believe that if he had had money he would have spent it all in adorning me. But I only accepted one ornament from him, and"—here she pressed Aaron's hand—" 'twas you gave him the means to buy it. How kind you were! On our wedding day I intend to wear those ear-rings."

Knox, who did not like to be reminded of any of his generous acts, now dropped the subject of Helen

Jones, and began to talk about the farm which he meant to have when the war was over.

"Tell me, Jenny," he said, "what kind of a place shall it be! You have good taste and I want to consult you in everything."

"Well, to begin, let the house be built of logs and let it stand on a hill so that I may have a fine view and see you while you are at work. Then there should be a trout-stream running through it; for I have heard you say that you wished Heaven might be a never-ending brook, babbling, rushing down a never-ending hill, and that you might be allowed to fish along its banks without ever growing tired of mounting towards its source far, far up in the blue sky."

"Yes, so I did; but now, dear Jenny, I should have to have you at my side. I am changed since I told you that: do you think I would care to wander up the stream alone?"

The girl made no response, but sighed and thought of David; and while she is wondering how all the loves and vows of this world will be reconciled in the next, let us return to Billy Smith.

Not many minutes after Jane and Aaron had left the house, he might have been found seated on the sofa next to Mrs. M'Neil, holding in his right hand a large tumbler, the largest in the dame's cupboard, while his left arm was twined lovingly round her waist. We need not say what was in the tumbler, but simply remark that he took care to make her swallow two sips of the beverage to his one. And as she went on drinking the squint of her eyes became brighter, while Billy giggled and ran his fingers along the necklace, which as it lay on her fat and rosy neck looked like a string of pebbles resting on a lobster bed.

"Aren't they be-ootiful?" said the good woman. "I'm awful glad you appreciate 'em: but stop counting 'em so often, you tickle me."

"They—are—splendid," said Billy; "but sha! you oughtn't to wear such things."

"And pray why not?" exclaimed Mrs. M'Neil slightly miffed.

“‘Cause some women don’t need beautifying.” As he spoke he gently pressed the tumbler to her lips.

“And you think I’m one of them kind?” she said, taking another sip.”

“Yes, but I didn’t like to say so, for you never want me to talk about your good ‘pints’; but at last you’ve wormed it out of me.”

Another quarter of an hour went by, at the end of which time Mrs. M’Neil closed her eyes; but she opened them again almost immediately, then frowned and began to stare at the candle. But, alas! what good could the candle do? Already it was bobbing up and down like a Jack-o-lantern, and presently she smiled a sleepy stupid smile and declared that there were two lights on the table instead of one. Then she leaned towards it and tried to snuff the wick—and thanks to Billy’s friendly aid succeeded in reaching it—but only burnt her thumb. The pain roused her for a moment, but Billy, who was in that dubious state when it is as easy to cry as to giggle, burst into tears and after giving the poor thumb a kiss, drowned her agony in another sip of punch.

This sip was the feather that broke the camel’s back: the dame’s eyes then closed and this time she did not open them; then after admiring her a few minutes as she lay back on the sofa, Mr. Smith gently took off the necklace. But it cost him a pang. “‘Tis the cruellest job I ever did,” he sighed; “and when my swan wakes up and finds it gone, she’ll fly into a rage and like enough break off the troth. Oh Jane M’Crea! for nobody but you would I do such a thing as this!”

Had Billy been less under the influence of the liquor himself, he probably could have put the pearls into the corncracker and made chicken-feed out of them at once. But instead of doing so, he, like a fool, slipped them over his own head, then proceeded to brew some fresh punch. And when it was made, he smacked his lips and declared that it was stronger than the first glass. In a little while the chairs in the room seemed to be performing a jig, and a wild notion entered his

brain that the necklace was a decoration which he had received for leading a forlorn hope. At length he folded his arms, muttered something like "forward march," then his head drooped, and before you could count six he too was asleep.

Now, whether it was any mysterious sympathy between the two noses we cannot tell, but certain it is that Billy's snore and the widow's snore came exactly together, while between the snoring the clock went "tick-tack; tick-tack," and really the noses and the pendulum made quite fair music.

It was in this condition that Jane M'Crea found the happy couple on her return from her walk, and being a quick-witted girl, she guessed at once the plan which Billy had adopted to obtain possession of the necklace and why he had failed to carry it out satisfactorily. "But I'll finish what he began," she said, "and, when he wakes up, I'll give him a lecture on temperance." With this she took the pearls off his neck, then having torn them apart went into the garden and there scattered them about in every direction.

What followed may be easily imagined: Jane M'Crea had retired to her room and was enjoying a sound sleep when she was roused by loud and angry voices, and hastening to the top of the staircase, heard Mrs. M'Neil upbraiding poor Billy for having stolen the necklace. "This puts an end to our betrothal," she cried: "Oh, you did it; don't lie!"

Then Mr. Smith with bloodshot eyes took the candle which was burnt almost down to the socket, and drew it along the floor, declaring that he was as innocent of the charge as a new-born baby. But although he searched in every part of the room, nowhere could he find the missing pearls, and at length he went off to his cabin muttering, "there must be a devil in this house; thank God they are going to move out of it."

CHAPTER XXVII.

LATE in the evening of July the second Jane M'Crea received a message from her betrothed, telling her not to fail to be at Cambridge on the following day: "Washington," he wrote, "has just arrived, and to-morrow takes command of the army; so be sure and come."

"Yes, go; 'twill do you good," said Mrs. M'Neil. "There is nothing to keep you here, now that the Ordinary is sold; and when you return we'll start off together for New York."

Jane tried to persuade the dame to accompany her to camp, but this she stubbornly refused to do: "No," she said, "I want to give Mr. Smith a lesson. I've been too good-natured all along, and if I simmer down so quick after what he did, he'll have less respect for me than ever. The pearls were your'n, I know, and if you've gone and buried 'em why 'tis your business, nobody else's. But for him to steal 'em from me when I was asleep—oh that's an insult I can't get over just yet."

In vain Jane pleaded for poor Billy, assuring the widow that he had only carried out her instructions, which were to recover the necklace at all hazards; the good woman put her fingers in her ears and refused to listen, and the girl was obliged to go to Cambridge alone.

Fortunately, although the third of July opened with a cloudless sky, there was a delicious breeze blowing from the west, which tempered the heat and allowed her to ride much faster than she would otherwise have done.

Early as it was—the sun had just risen—she found scores of women besides herself on the road, many of them laden with presents for their friends and sweet-hearts; and one of her companions, a merry blue-eyed lass, who carried a basket of cherries on her arm, kept

wondering why Jim Emerson had not written : " But I'll surprise him," she said, little knowing what Jane knew, that he had been killed on Bunker Hill.

As they drew near Cambridge the crowd became greater, until you might have supposed that all the females in the Province were going there ; and the pedestrians and horses raised such a cloud of dust that the blackberries on the roadside were turned white, and you could scarcely see a hundred paces ahead. At length towards eight o'clock Jane caught sight of the tall elm tree on the north end of the Common, and leaving the bright-eyed lass to find out what had become of Jim Emerson, she urged her nag into a trot and in a few minutes was in the town.

The scene which now presented itself to her view was most exciting, and she rejoiced that Knox had told her to come. Along the whole length of Main street, and apparently as far as the eye could reach, stood the troops ; the flags of the different Provinces waving gracefully in the breeze, and bands of music making the air joyous with the strains of Yankee Doodle.

The number of men under arms, according to the information given by an Orderly whom she questioned on the subject, was thirteen thousand ; the majority being from Massachusetts. But the Carolinas, Virginia, Maryland, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island, were each represented by stalwart, determined volunteers.

Immediately in the rear of Colonel Brewer's regiment Jane M'Crea drew in her palfrey, and after letting Knox know that she had arrived, did not say anything more to him, but waited impatiently for the appearance of the Commander-in-Chief. The time, however, did not hang heavily ; there was so much to see, such fine music to listen to, that an hour flew quickly by.

At length, just as the meeting-house clock struck nine, the bands ceased to play and the notes of a bugle rang out clear and shrill along the street. Then followed the hum of many voices, " he is coming, he is coming," and we may imagine how Jane rose in the

stirrup, and strained her eyes in the direction of the elm tree.

Presently a group of horsemen were seen approaching the Common, and among them she recognized Israel Putnam, now a major general; and near him rode Artemas Ward, Nathaniel Green, William Heath, Charles Lee and Richard Montgomery. But he who led the group was the man on whom all eyes were turned.

In the forty-third year of his age, broad-chested and tall, with a dignified but not a solemn face, and with light blue eyes, through which beamed a soul full of devotion to his country, he impressed the multitude as just the man to be Commander-in-Chief.

When he got to the shade of the elm, Washington reined in his steed, and then, unable any longer to restrain their enthusiasm, the troops sent up a cheer which was heard distinctly in Boston; and it was followed by another and another, and the enemy greatly wondered what was the matter; then as soon as quiet was restored, he drew his sword and riding a few paces from his suite, spoke as follows:

“SOLDIERS,—The Continental Congress having taken all the troops of the several colonies, which have been raised or which may be hereafter raised for the support and defence of the liberties of America, into their pay and service, you are now the troops of the United Provinces of North America; and it is hoped that all distinction of colonies will be laid aside, so that one and the same spirit may animate the whole, and the only contest be, who shall render on this great and trying occasion the most essential service to the great and common cause in which we are all engaged. I shall require and expect that exact discipline be observed and due subordination prevail throughout the whole army, as a failure in these most essential points must necessarily produce extreme hazard, disorder and confusion, and end in shameful disappointment and disgrace. I shall likewise most earnestly require and expect a due observance of those articles of war, established for the government of the army, which forbid pro-

fane cursing, swearing and drunkenness; and in like manner I shall require and expect of all officers and soldiers, not engaged on actual duty, a punctual attendance on divine service, to implore the blessings of heaven upon the means used for our safety and defence. The different flags which you have brought with you will be changed for one which shall be an emblem of Union; and may it please Almighty God that the stars and stripes be carried forward in triumph by the Continental army to Peace and Independence."

When he finished speaking, there was a loud roll of drums and a flourish of trumpets, and at once the Pine tree flags of the Eastern regiments, the Rattlesnake flag of the Virginia troops, and the Crescent flag of the Carolinas, were lowered, and in their stead appeared as many banners, each with thirteen stripes alternate red and white and a constellation of thirteen stars. And while the drums and trumpets were giving the salute, a cheer louder even than the first broke from the enthusiastic battalions, Jane M'Crea waved her handkerchief and even the lass who had come to see Jim Emerson—but who knew by this time that she would never lay eyes on him again—threw back her hood and smiled through her tears. When quiet was again restored, Washington accompanied by his generals, rode down the lines, then back to the elm tree, after which the regiments, breaking into column of companies, marched past in review.

With this the ceremony, which had drawn together so many spectators, ended, and Jane after stopping a few minutes to console the blue-eyed girl for the loss of her lover, went off to Knox's tent.

On arriving she found Billy Smith already there, hard at work brushing the dust off his coat, and the first words he uttered were, "did she come with you, Miss Jenny?"

The expression of his face, when the latter shook her head, was heart-rending: "All my trouble, all my suffering have been for nothing!" he sighed. "Alas, what shall I do?"

But Jane begged him not to despair; "you cannot tell," she said, "how much I regret what has happened, and all the more because I myself have been the cause of it, nevertheless, do not lose hope; I will try my utmost to soothe Mrs. M'Neil's wounded feelings, and when she finds herself far away in a strange part of the country, her heart will relent; yes, I am sure it will."

"Pray the Lord that you may turn out a prophet," said Billy, his countenance suddenly brightening.

"Make her buy a farm with no rocks upon it, and where there is a stream with water-power enough to turn a mill: let her keep an eye to the future. This war won't last forever, and when peace comes, good farms will be worth three times what they are now."

"I promise you that I will," said Jane; "already methinks I see yourself and that excellent woman living in harmony together."

"Excellent woman!" repeated Billy, rolling up his eyes and at the same time thrusting a huge piece of tobacco into his mouth. "Aye that she is! and whether she ever again takes a fancy to me or not, I'll plough her land, and husk her corn, and chop her wood for nothing as long as I live, I will." Then after a pause, "but now, Miss Jenny, tell me how did you like Wash?"

"Wash? Who is he?"

"Why our new Commander-in-Chief; George Washington is his name, all spelt out, but we boys have christened him Wash."

"Well you boys ought to be more respectful and not style him thus," said Jane. "If you want to please me you'll not repeat it."

"Humph! you talk exactly as Cap. does. I didn't mind him, however; but if you say I mustn't call our new Commander-in-Chief Wash, why I promise you that I won't."

At this moment Knox appeared and was about to embrace his betrothed when he was startled by a rough voice close by and looking round beheld the same individual, who had so unceremoniously entered Buckman's tavern the evening of the nineteenth of April."

"Ship ahoy!" cried Captain Broughton. "How's the witch?" and as he spoke he seized Jane M'Crea's hand and squeezed it without minding in the least Aaron's look of displeasure.

"I say how's the pretty craft been? chipped any more splinters off the topsail yard, eh?"

The girl returned this bluff greeting most cordially, then, whispering to Knox not to be angry, went on to inquire how he had been since the battle of Lexington.

"Oh, well ballasted and ready for squalls as well as calms," answered the mariner; then in a serious tone, "but you're not looking so fresh as you were; you worry too much about the war perhaps? Well, it has broken up many a home, but it won't last forever. So carry sail, my witch, there's smooth water ahead."

"There is," returned Jane, glancing at Aaron, "but tell me now, what have you been doing these last few months?"

"Fitting out just the prettiest craft, except the Witch of the Wave, that ever sailed from Marblehead. She's a foretopsail schooner, two hundred and fifty tons, carries a cloud of canvas and her name is the Hannah. So you see I've not been losing my time."

"And you are going to turn her into a privateer?" said Jane.

"How well you have guessed it! Lots of folks have said to me, why there's no tradin' to be done such times as these; you're throwing your money away; better buy a farm or enlist! But, Miss M'Crea, you're keener than all of 'em put together."

"And when do you sail?" inquired Jane.

"As soon as I can get a commission. 'Tis what brings me here to-day. I want to see the Commander-in-Chief, but there is such a crowd at headquarters that I can't get in; it's like bees around a hive."

"Well, if you come with me I'll make a way for you to General Washington's presence. No harm is there, Aaron?"

"None," replied the latter. "But His Excellency

does not know you any more than he does Captain Broughton."

"True, but I'll tell him who we both are. He'll believe me!"

As she spoke these words the look of admiration which spread over the mariner's face would be hard to describe, and clapping his tarred and weather-beaten hands together—

"By Kidd's soul," he cried, "he won't dare say No to you."

In about half an hour after this conversation, Jane and her sailor-companion found themselves at the foot of a terrace, which led by a flight of stone steps to the elegant mansion where the Commander-in-Chief had established his headquarters. The highway to Waltham ran close by and between it and the terrace a crowd of country people were gazing up with curious eyes at the building, from the roof of which the Stars and Stripes were flying, and Jane could not but smile at some of the remarks which they made: One woman declared that Washington looked too much like a preacher to fight; whereat another rejoined that she did not see why a man could not fight just as well if he were a preacher as if he were a shoemaker; Peter cut a man's ear off and yet he was a very good Apostle.

"But you can't go up yonder," spoke both women to Jane. We tried it and had to come down again. There's a sentry on top of the terrace, who has orders to let nobody enter the mansion except on business."

"Never mind, carry sail!" whispered Broughton. This admonition was quite unnecessary, for his fair pilot was determined not to be balked in what she had undertaken, and when presently the soldier, who was mounting guard above—and who happened to be the blacksmith of Lexington—saw her coming up the steps he became greatly troubled, for he knew how bold and resolute she was.

"Strict orders, Miss Jenny," he exclaimed, "to let nobody pass unless he has business;" then in a low, coaxing voice—"so, be a good girl and go back."

"Well, on my word of honor I have important business to transact with General Washington," returned the young woman.

"Oh, then you may pass," said the sentry, looking curiously at Broughton and wondering what he and Jane M'Crea were doing together. But when they reached the mansion, it was on Jane and not on the sailor that all eyes were turned, and Putnam declared with an oath that she could push her way where no other girl could.

"Steady!" whispered Broughton, when for a moment, but only for a moment, she appeared to hesitate under the gaze of so many officers. Jane quickly recovered her self-possession, then told General Putnam that she wanted to see the Commander-in-Chief.

"And you shall see him," exclaimed the bluff soldier, "make way, my friends, make way;" and as he spoke he took her hand and led her to the door of the room in which Washington was busy writing a Report to Congress.

Broughton, who kept close to her heels, smoothed down his beard as Putnam knocked, but did not take off his hat, nor do we believe he would have done so at all, had not Jane set him the example by doffing her hood.

In another moment they were in the great man's presence, and as he looked up from his work, the girl fancied that he was not altogether pleased to be interrupted; yet he said nothing and let Putnam go on and tell who Jane M'Crea was, after which the latter patted her hand and withdrew. But no sooner did the door close behind him, than the stern expression passed from Washington's face, and it became like that of a parent greeting a child, and motioning Jane to a seat, he inquired in a kind tone what he could do for her.

"I am here, your Excellency, to ask nothing for myself," she replied, still standing in front of the table, while Broughton kept playing with his hat and gazing up at the ceiling; "but I want to introduce to you a true American—Robert Broughton, of Marblehead, an

excellent sailor, and who, if he can procure a commission, has a vessel ready to sail against the enemy."

For about a minute Washington was silent; his eyes were fixed on Broughton; he noted his ear-rings, his black, curly hair, and tattooed hands, and the mariner, although he tried to appear so, was not quite as much at his ease as if he had been on the deck of his schooner; then in a somewhat less gentle tone than the one in which he had addressed Jane M'Crea, "tell me," he said, "how many years have you followed the sea? and in what trade have you been chiefly engaged?"

"I reefed topsails when I was fifteen, and have been cruising ever since," answered Broughton, "whaling, cod-fishing, smuggling, and I know every rock, shoal, and current 'tween Cape Horn and New Foundland."

Well, you are the very man I want," continued Washington. "Congress has authorized me to issue Naval commissions: to you I give the first; 'twill be sent to Marblehead to-morrow." Then after a pause, during which Broughton whispered "'Bout ship!"—for, having succeeded in getting what he wanted, he thought it time to withdraw—Washington went on to inform him that the army was in great need of powder, and that his first ship must be a powder ship.

"Aye," exclaimed Jane, "the red-coats would not have driven us from Bunker Hill, if we had had more powder."

"She speaks true," said Broughton, "for she was in the fight, just as she was on the nineteenth of April at Lexington, and knows all about it."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Washington, "well, you were fortunate to escape unharmed."

"Yes, she didn't get a scratch;" pursued the mariner, "but in the first fight, she came near losing her topsail-yard."

The Commander-in-Chief smiled, then taking her hand, asked where she had been wounded, for he did not understand the sailor's language.

"In the arm, your Excellency," replied the girl.

blushing, and wishing that her friend had held his tongue about it. "But I am quite well now."

"And how came you to be on Bunker Hill?"

"I went there to see my brother, who belongs to Morgan's Virginia riflemen, and finding that I could not recross Charlestown Neck, was obliged to stay in the redoubt."

"Well, did he get safely through the battle?"

"Alas, no; he was wounded and taken prisoner, and I greatly fear that he and the rest of our brave fellows who fell into the enemy's hands, will be sent aboard the prison-ship which General Gage is fitting up."

At this piece of intelligence, Washington's eyes flashed with a fury which you would not have thought him capable of, and it was more than a minute before he spoke again. "Well, war is no child's play," he continued, "some must be martyrs."

"I'll make a few martyrs on t'other side," interrupted Broughton; "by the soul of Kidd the pirate I will."

"You are not to retaliate without my orders, sir," returned Washington, "but if you find a chance to capture the prison-ship and free the captives, great shall be your reward."

Here the sailor again whispered, "'Bout ship;" but Washington would not let the girl depart, and went on to ask whether she had any friend or relative in the army besides her brother. "There's a young man named Aaron Knox, captain in the Second Massachusetts regiment," answered Jane, "to whom I am betrothed, and if your Excellency can help him in any way I will be ever grateful."

"Yes, I know him; he's a tip-top fellow," said Broughton, "and as true a patriot as this girl herself—Jane M'Crea wouldn't love any but an American."

"I did once—I do still, and if he came to life, I would again be his betrothed," spoke Jane, looking boldly at her friend; but presently she bowed her head, and a tear ran down her cheek, and during the pause which followed, it were hard to say which appeared the most astonished, Broughton or the Commander-in-Chief

‘But that makes me none the less true to my country,” she continued, overcoming in a few moments the grief which the remembrance of her first love had awakened in her breast; “nor should your Excellency wonder that David Jones took up arms for the King: his father was an officer in the British army, and when the youth to whom I had plighted my troth, went to meet a soldier’s death at Ticonderoga, he knew that he was doing what his parent would have gloried to have him do.”

“David Jones!” repeated Washington, “David Jones! I once knew an officer of that name. He was with General Braddock in the expedition against Fort Duquesne, and he and I were excellent friends.”

“’Twas no doubt my David’s father,” said Jane, her countenance brightening; “for I’ve heard the youth say that he was in that expedition.”

Well, if the son was at all like the parent, then your lover must have been not only good, but very handsome; and fair flowers always find each other out.”

“’Bout ship;” whispered Broughton, for the third time, and giving Jane’s arm a pinch, for he was quite out of patience, “’Bout ship!”

With a bright glance of her eye, the girl acknowledged the compliment which Washington had paid her, then believing herself that the interview had lasted long enough, she thanked him once more for having given her friend a commission and withdrew, feeling not a little proud of her success.

“Well, how did you succeed?” exclaimed Knox, whom they found waiting for them at the foot of the terrace.

“The breeze favored us all the way,” replied the mariner; the witch carries the Trades* with her wherever she goes—I’m to command the first American man-of-war!” Here Billy Smith approached, and with a familiarity which Aaron had never known him to use before, he slipped his arm through Jane’s and drew her aside. “Miss Jenny,” he whispered, “I was afraid

* Sea term for Trade winds.

you might go back to Lexington without my seeing you again ; but thank the Lord you haven't ; and now I want to say that I put my case entirely in your hands. You know how I feel towards Mrs. M'Niel ; it's something which can be expressed. I'm burning all over with love ; so do your very best to get her to pardon me."

"I will be your advocate," said Jane ; "cheer up ; all will turn out right in the end."

"Do you think so?" and there was something sad in the tone of his voice.

"Why of course I do ; come, come, don't look so melancholy."

"Well, yes, 'tis foolish to be downhearted, and I'm going to try and be jolly again." Then, with one of his old-fashioned grins, "now tell me, Miss Jenny, what road do you take when you go to New York?"

"I presume the New London road ; but why such a question ? are you going to follow us?"

"Oh, never mind ; I only ask for information's sake."

Here the whispering was interrupted by Broughton, who called out "good-by." "I must be off," he said, "but depend on it you'll hear from the Hannah afore a great while ; she'll outsail every ship in the king's navy. I'll raise hell along this coast !"

"I doubt not that you will cover the stars and stripes with glory," returned Jane ; "but be merciful and spare blood whenever you can."

"Your words, my witch, shall save many a throat. I'll bear you in mind ; good-by !" With this he shook her hand ; then, nodding to Aaron, he turned and went on his way to Marblehead.

For more than a minute after the sailor had gone, neither the girl nor her betrothed spoke a word to each other, and a shade of sadness came over their faces. Knox felt that he too must bid her farewell, and although he did not doubt that she would return safe to his arms, yet the times were full of peril, and his heart clung to her more closely than if the days had been days of peace. Nor was Jane without apprehen-

sion, and even more for Aaron than for herself. Great changes might happen before she got back from New York; other battles might be fought, and he might not escape as he had at Lexington and Bunker Hill. And Harry, what might she hear about him when she came back? How long would he live pent up in the Scorpion? What might not the villain, the clutch of whose hand she had already felt on her throat, do in order to satisfy his rage? "Alas!" she sighed, "poor Harry! poor Helen! may God have mercy on you!"

In a little while they arrived on the spot where the girl had left her horse, and when Knox had helped her into the saddle, "tell me," he said, "how long will you be away?"

"But for Mrs. M'Neil I would not leave Cambridge at all," replied Jane. "I'd stay here until the wedding day; but the good woman wants my company until she has chosen her new home, and you know I am to choose one for you. Therefore, I must go with her to New York; but I'll be back in a few weeks. Indeed, how could I be long gone? Isn't October almost upon us? Do you want time to fly faster?"

"Oh, I do!" said Knox, his hand trembling as he held hers; "it goes on wings of lead."

"Well, I promise to be in camp again when the first katydids are singing, and you know that we hear them about the end of August."

With this they separated, Jane McCrea, as she rode off, sighing, "the autumn will come, but the dead will not come with it;" while Knox, who stood watching her retreating figure, longed for the katydids and the frost. "But they are coming," he said; "oh, yes, they are, and with them sunny days. How happy I am!"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE loss of Bunker Hill did not loosen the grip with which the Patriot army held the Royal troops, and prevented them from invading the interior of the coun-

try. Steadily, day by day, the British generals were able to distinguish more and more redoubts encircling the city of Boston; at night they found the mouth of Mystic river and the shore between Charlestown Neck and Roxbury patrolled by whale-boats with muffled oars;* while during the day skirmishing parties would sally forth from the American lines and approach with a recklessness which it was believed could only proceed from a well-grounded confidence in their own strength. Little did the British know that at this very time—July, 1775—Washington had not powder enough for nine cartridges to a man.†

“We hold you fast and you cannot invade us, but you are making sad havoc with what little of America you do hold,” said Harry M’Crea in a playful tone, as he sat one evening toward the last of July beside Helen Jones: “It seems that you have cut down the Liberty tree where the Sons of Liberty used to hold their meetings, and have turned the Old South meeting house into a riding school.”

The girl, to whose faithful nursing he was indebted for the speedy recovery from his wound, gazed sadly at him as he spoke, and he wondered what had become of her mirth and high spirits. Usually such a remark would have elicited a quick retort.

“When you were ill,” said Helen, who understood well enough his air of surprise, “I kept cheerful; ’twould not have been good for you to see a mournful face at the bedside. But if you had lost a brother would you not find it hard to smother your grief? And David, my twin brother, is dead; from your own sister’s lips I got the news.” Then softly dropping her hand on his arm, “but why do you stare and frown so? You might console me, but you won’t, and you look now as you did when we first met—as if I frightened you.”

For more than a minute there was silence between them, and during this minute all the kind, forgiving words which his sister had spoken came back to Harry M’Crea; but in vain, the ghost had come with them,

* Frothingham, p. 223.

† Sparks’ Life of Washington.

and Helen Jones, as she observed the expression of misery, almost despair on his face, determined to find out the cause. "Tell me," she continued, "tell me your secret; you have one, I know; do not repel me; I am an orphan, not a brother nor sister left, am I not even to have a friend?"

Without making any answer, the youth abruptly rose from his seat and with a wild look which startled the Indian woman as much as it did her mistress, was about to leave the room, when the former caught his arm.

"Stay," said Nanny, "you are not able yet to walk out alone in the street; you shall not go without Miss Helen or me."

"Even to please my sister, I will remain here no longer," rejoined Harry. "Do not detain me, let me find my comrades and go with them to the prison ship."

"You shall do no such thing," she continued, planting her solid frame against the door; "why you must be mad to talk so. Ho! 'tis well Count von Meyer isn't here, or he'd gratify you soon enough."

"Oh, where is the Count?" inquired Helen eagerly. "I have been wondering what has become of him."

"I heard yesterday," answered Nanny, "that he has set off on a mission to the Iroquois tribe in New York;"—then with a savage grin—"may those whom he has gone to bribe, begin their work by taking his own scalp!"

"The miserable wretch!" exclaimed Harry M'Crea. "Yet cruel as he is, I would welcome him and beg him to take me to the prison ship."

"Well, if you went, I would go too," spoke Helen, with a faint blush; "aye, for more reasons than one I would: your sister was my brother's betrothed; how can I look on you with an indifferent eye? oh, believe me, David is a link between us which all your frowns cannot sever."

"And I feel in the day, and at night in my dreams, that link burning into my very soul," cried the youth, fixing his eyes upon her with an intense, passionate

gaze; but while the blood crimsoned her cheeks, his own were paler than ever. "You think I am mad, but I am not. You once guessed the truth: in my breast is a secret, a dark, cruel secret, which gives me no rest. Oh, would that I were a worm that I might crawl under your feet and be crushed; only death can wash the blood off my hands."

These words had scarcely passed his lips when the Indian woman sprang toward her mistress, who had staggered backward as if struck by a violent blow, and at once Harry escaped from the room. Poor Helen Jones! Bitter were the tears she shed during the next quarter of an hour, and deep were her sighs. "But I will not hate him," she murmured, when she had recovered a little from the shock which he had given her, for she had understood only too well the meaning of his words, and she did not wonder now at the trouble and unhappiness which her resemblance to David had caused him; "no, I will not hate him; he and my brother were on opposite sides, nothing strange that he killed him; in war such things must happen."

Nor was it long before her warm and tender feelings for the youth returned, and even more tender they were, since he had fled from her presence like an outcast. She remembered that Jane M'Crea had been betrothed to David, and she remembered, too, the prison ship. "Go, Nanny," she said, "go bring him back; he is weak and cannot be far from the house; if he is arrested and taken aboard the Scorpion, I may never see him again."

The Indian woman obeyed the order with alacrity, for, however mistrustful she had been at first of Harry M'Crea, she had grown very fond of him, especially since a certain day when he had confided to her his secret love for Helen.

"How mysterious life is!" said the latter to herself, as soon as she was alone and holding up before her eyes her father's medal. Who would have believed a few months ago that I should ever have felt as I do towards a rebel; one who is trying to rob the king of his col-

onies? But I cannot help it; and I believe if my father were alive he would say, "love him still, for he is a good youth, and when the war is over make him cry—'God save the King!'" But, alas, he does not think that we shall even put down the rebellion: foolish youth!"

She was soliloquizing and listening impatiently for footsteps on the staircase, when suddenly the door opened and who should enter but Harry M'Crea, alone, and oh how changed! His face was radiant with joy and his gait as he stepped across the threshold was almost as firm as it had ever been. "Glorious news!" he cried, extending his arms as he advanced; "I feel as though I were in Heaven; glorious news! David is alive!" Then before she could prevent him, he pressed his lips to her cheek. So startling were his words, so taken aback was she by his greeting that she could not speak for almost a minute. How could the dead come to life? Had she rightly understood him! Had he really kissed her?

"Oh, Harry M'Crea, be calm, tell me what you mean; are you mad?" at length she said, half laughing, half crying.

"Never so sane and happy as I am at this moment," returned the youth; "Count von Meyer, who has come back from New York, found a letter in his room announcing that your brother is alive and on his way here. He showed the letter to Nanny, who it seems you had sent in pursuit of me, and she told me about it and I begged her to let me be the first to bring you the glad tidings. Oh, can you wonder that I am in an ecstasy of joy? I, who in a moment of passion struck what I believed to be a mortal blow on David, find that he is alive! Thank God! Thank God!"

Then while tears of happiness glistened in Helen's eyes, he went on—but no longer in the same joyful tone—to inform her that the Hessian had declared to Nanny that no exception could be made in his favor, and that he must share the fate of the other prisoners, who are going immediately aboard the Scorpion. "But I

cannot bid you good-by," he said, "without speaking a few words which till now I have not had courage to utter; tell me, Helen Jones, when Peace returns, will you be my bride?"

"You have my hand and you may keep it, nor shall the prison-ship separate us," was the quick response, and as he heard it the flush on Harry's cheek answered to the bright color on hers; and the glow was still there when the Indian woman entered. "Well, I knew 'twould come to this," said Nanny, with a chuckle, "what a surprise it will be to master David when he arrives."

"And when will he be here?" exclaimed Helen; "how soon? to-day?"

"In three weeks or a month," answered Nanny; then in a more serious tone, "but when he does arrive he'll have to work his own way along, for I've discovered that Count von Meyer has turned against you, and instead of helping David he'll persecute him if he can. But for all that, be wise and follow my advice; in the end you'll get the better of the villain, now do as I tell you."

She had scarcely spoken when heavy tramping was heard on the staircase, and in another moment the door was thrown open and three marines entered. Then before Helen Jones could rush between them and her betrothed, Harry was dragged rudely out of the room. In vain she screamed and struggled to go with him; a strong arm held her back.

"Oh child, child, don't carry on so about it," said Nanny when a few minutes later they found themselves locked in. "Think of David, who is coming soon; if you cried your eyes out you couldn't free Harry M'Crea, whatever his comrades suffer he must suffer, so be a good sensible girl and stop crying."

But in vain, all her consoling words, and gentle reproofs; Helen's grief could not be subdued all at once and it was almost half an hour before she could speak to Nanny in a calm way; then in a low, weak voice, "tell me," she said, "did Count von Meyer meet Jane

M'Crea while he was off on his mission to the Indians? I feel very anxious; did you not hear him say anything about her?"

"Not a word," replied Nanny; "and yet I shouldn't wonder a bit if he had met her and if she had got the better of him in some way, for he looks fiercer than I ever saw him before; whereas he ought to be in the best of spirits, having succeeded so well with the Iroquois: why, he has bribed 'em all to take up the hatchet."

"Oh, the heartless mercenary," exclaimed Helen, "Fool, fool that I was ever to put faith in him!"

"Well, child, I'm, partly to blame for that," said Nanny; "cunning as I am it took me some time to discover his true nature; but hist!"

As she spoke they again heard footsteps in the hall, then the key turned in the lock and in another moment the count appeared on the threshold. Helen, without waiting to hear what he had to say, and despite the sign which the Indian woman made her, began at once to upbraid him for having used his influence to have Harry M'Crea sent aboard the prison ship. Her words were few but sharp and Nanny trembled. Well she might; she knew his power, she knew his cruelty, and now as the satanic expression came over his face—the expression which Jane M'Crea had observed with so much horror—she felt tempted to put her hand on the girl's mouth to make her keep silent. Already the latter had called him a hypocrite and a villain; what else might she not say?

But when Helen did hold her tongue, the count, to her surprise, only smiled, and folding his arms watched her a moment, as a keeper might watch some animal whom he has placed in a cage, and whose rage can do him no harm. Then in slow and solemn tones, "the words which leave our lips," he said, "can never be recalled; I have heard you, and you may be sure that I will not forget your speech. You were to be my friend and I was to be yours. You have deceived me; and I do not doubt that you are at heart a rebel. But

the king shall have nothing to fear from you. This room is not a bad prison ; remain here and meditate on your folly." Then slowly he closed the door and disappeared.

CHAPTER XXIX.

LET us go back in our narrative to the evening of the third of July, when Jane M'Crea returned from her visit to Cambridge, where she had been to see General Washington take command of the army.

On reaching home—if we may still call Buckman's tavern by that name—she found Mrs. M'Neil all packed up and ready to depart on the following morning for New York. "There is nothing to keep me here any longer," said the dame; "the chickens and bee-hives are sold, and our clothes are in the bag, so I'm determined to be off the minute the cock crows. It is better to travel early and rest in the heat of the day."

Jane made no opposition. Then while she prepared the table for supper, she gave the widow an account of all that she had seen at the camp; and when she related about her visit with Bob Broughton to headquarters, the good woman declared that she was the boldest girl she had ever heard of. Of course, Billy Smith was not forgotten, and the mention of his name caused Mrs. M'Neil's heart to double its palpitations. "He is under a heavy cloud," said Jane, "and as I am to blame for what he did, I shall not have an easy conscience till he is forgiven. Therefore, I do beg you once more to take him into your favor; he has shown that he has courage, he loves you devotedly; oh, do be again his betrothed."

"Well, upon my word, you're a tantalizing gal," spoke the dame. "Just when I'm coolin' off and gettin' back my senses, here you come pleading for Billy Smith as only you can plead."

"And why should I not take his part?" continued Jane, encouraged by Mrs. M'Neil's tone and manner.

"Believe me, he would work his fingers off hoeing corn and chopping wood for you, and there will be plenty of hard work to do on your new farm."

"So there will," murmured the widow, "and I've gone so far that I'm afraid I couldn't forget Billy if I tried. Oh, Jenny, Jenny, I'm a caged bird." During the meal which followed, the dame evidently labored under excitement, and more than once she moved impatiently in her chair and inquired if there was any likelihood of Mr. Smith coming to see them off in the morning. "We women," she said, "are wonderfully mysterious creatures; we're shy as trout when men first throw the bait to us; but, Lord! when we get the hook down there's no giving it up again. There are moments when I know I ought to stay unmarried, but there are moments, too, when I'd go tramping round the world after Billy Smith, and I don't doubt, Jenny, but that you're awful impatient for October to come round, eh?"

"We are indeed mysterious beings," murmured Jane, pressing her hand to her brow, while a sad expression stole over her face. "But Aaron is good and loves me dearly, oh, I'm sure he does, and so I must try and love him too, for he was David's best friend." Here she turned and gazed behind her; she thought that she had heard a voice, but Mrs. M'Neil had not spoken, and there was nobody besides themselves in the room. Then without waiting to finish her cup of tea or telling where she was going, she rose and putting on her hood, left the house.

"She hasn't forgotten David yet, nor never will," said the widow, who had watched her expression as she went out; "first love is true love. Now and then the roses come back to her cheeks, but they don't stay; they fade away like ghosts of flowers. I wonder where she has gone to; like enough to old Woodbury's grave."

While the good woman was thus soliloquizing, Jane was walking down the high-road towards the field, across which ran the path leading to the moss-covered

rock where Phebe Reed and the Ancient were buried. And as she went a strange doubt arose in her mind about her betrothal to Knox. "And yet," she said to herself, "Mr. Woodbury advised it, and if David could come back to earth he would not say that I had done wrong; would you, David?" There was no answer, but she gazed up at the starry heavens as if expecting to hear his voice. "No," she continued, "I'll not listen to that doubt; 'tis sent by the evil spirit to disturb me, but I'll pray, and love Aaron as much as I can."

In about a quarter of an hour she found herself on the rock, and had got to within a few steps of the rose-tree when she was startled by a noise in the bushes close by. She held her breath and her heart throbbed violently, for it seemed to be approaching; she remembered how Knox had urged her never to trust herself far from the village alone; why had she disobeyed him? While she was hesitating whether to remain and see what it was or flee, the voice cried out, "run, Jenny, run; save yourself!" and the timely warning was at once followed by a sound of blows and scuffling. It was a trying moment for the girl, brave as she was; ought she to hasten to Billy Smith's assistance—for it was his voice she had heard—or do what he had told her, and escape while yet there was a chance? For, should her faithful friend be overpowered, the brutal Hessian would have her at his mercy. The latter course, although undoubtedly the more prudent, was too cowardly for Jane M'Crea, and although she was unarmed, and could distinguish nothing through the dark wall of cedars which lined the rocks, she sprang towards the spot whence the alarm had come, and where the sound of blows had been succeeded by stifled cries as of a person that was being choked.

But the dense cat-briars caught her and held her fast, and when at length, after much trouble, she managed to free herself from them, the cries and groans had ceased and the footsteps of several persons were heard running off into the depths of the wood.

"The deed has been done," she said, shuddering

and feeling about in the bushes; "poor Billy is murdered." But presently a terror which she could not control seized upon her and, making her way back to the rock, she crossed it; then, with all speed, hurried to the village, and as she went she more than once fancied that somebody was pursuing her. But this was imagination, and soon she arrived at the Ordinary unharmed, but all out of breath, and never so glad to get there before.

"Quick, Mrs. M'Neil, quick! Get a weapon of some kind, and come back with me to the rock. Mr. Smith is killed or badly wounded; I'm sure he is. Oh, do make haste!" were her words, as she dashed into the little sitting-room.

At this announcement the widow dropped her knitting-needles and rose from the chair; but, being a cool-headed person, a moment's reflection showed her the folly of two women venturing out at such an hour to such a lonely spot, even with the protection of a pitchfork or carving-knife. Accordingly she bade Jane calm herself and explain clearly what she had seen and heard, "and when I've got a correct idea of it all," she added, "I'll rouse the town." But the girl was too excited and could only repeat, "quick, quick! make haste!" Then, finding the good woman still irresolute, she flew up the staircase to look for a dirk which she remembered to have once seen in a chest belonging to Mr. Woodbury; and for ten minutes, in every nook and corner, in her own chamber, in the Ancient's, in Mrs. M'Neil's, she hunted for it, but nowhere could she find it. Then, returning below, she bemoaned her ill-luck, whereat the dame declared that men were as scarce as weapons. "All gone to the war, Jenny, and only old Leech and Solomon Grundy left, and you know they are both too cowardly to face their own shadows. Nevertheless, something must be done for poor Billy Smith; aye, we must find out what has happened to him; so I'll just give a call at two or three houses, and get a few boys, and they can make a noise, even if they're not big enough to fight."

With this she put on her hood and was about to sally forth when she and Jane M'Crea were terrified by a knock on the window and the sight of a man's face pressed against the glass. "Stay inside, stay inside," said Billy Smith, for they soon recognized him; "Don't come out; stay where you be, and hear my story."

"Oh, the Lord be praised, he's alive!" cried Jane M'Crea, advancing to the window with the lamp. "But dear me, he is wounded! Look! a horrid gash across the forehead."

"Oh my, my! so he is!" exclaimed Mrs. M'Neil. "Brave, noble fellow! He's more than a hero! Forgiven Billy, forgiven; I love you more than ever I did, come in, come in." This fervent appeal overthrew his determination to hold aloof from them, and in another moment he was standing on the threshold. Jane advanced to meet him, so did the widow, but scarcely had the latter taken two steps when she clapped her hands to her bosom, then her face turned scarlet, and tottering back towards the staircase she began to cough and cough as if every blood-vessel in the body would burst. Jane, too, was almost overpowered, and a very little would have caused her to sink to the floor. As it was, she had to drop the lamp and lean against the table, with her face buried in her hands. Presently, unable to bear the torture any longer, Mrs. M'Neil flew to the upper story, leaving the girl alone with Mr. Smith, who was grinning and saying, "couldn't help it; don't be angry; told you not to ask me in." Then while Jane gasped and tried to speak, "I do believe," he went on, "'twas a special providence sent the 'varmint' to me; I'd 'ave been killed if he hadn't come. He made the Hessian quit his hold on my throat quick as lightning, and if I live a hundred years I'll never shoot a skunk."

Then with a deep sigh, "but my regimentals are spoilt for a month; I'll have to bury them and let the earth take out the smell."

"So 'twas, as I supposed, Count von Meyer who attacked you?" said Jane, speaking through her hand-

kerchief and shuddering as she pronounced the hated name.

"Yes, 'twas he; and now if you'll listen, I'll relate how it all happened. To begin, you must know that captain Knox had told me about the wretch and so I was on the lookout. Well, this morning, while I was walking back to the camp after bidding you good-by, it occurred to me that I ought to make a bold push to see my adored before she went away; 'she is going,' said I, 'to a distant part of the country, I must lay eyes on her before she departs, and ask her once more to forgive me. So having obtained leave of the colonel, off I started. But the day, you know, was very hot, and, when I had walked eight or nine miles, I was quite used up by the heat and concluded to lay down and take a nap.

"A sleep now," said I, "will help keep me awake this evening, and if Mrs. M'Neil's heart softens we'll have a jolly spree in the old tavern and not go to bed till midnight. Well, I was not long in finding a cosey nook near a stone-wall and under the shade of a locust tree, where I threw myself down, then laying my head on this"—here he drew his Bible from his haversack, the same Bible which he had lost on Bunker Hill, but which a comrade had picked up and restored to him—"I soon fell asleep, a sweet sleep in which I had a dream too blissful to repeat. How long I slept I don't know; but suddenly I awoke and heard a man's voice on 'tother side of the fence, and, Miss Jenny, he pronounced your name!—Still as a mouse I lay listening; but 'twas very little else he said. I was able, however, to gather that he was in search of you, and peeping through a tiny hole in the wall, I discovered that he had a rope in his hand and that he was making a noose with it. Finally, he got up and walked away. In a few minutes I rose too, and looking cautiously over the fence saw an old man with a pack on his back going towards the high road. 'If that is the Hessian officer,' thought I, 'he is well disguised, for cap. told me that he had black hair, whereas this fellow's hair is snow

white ! Well, I followed him without being discovered, for I kept close to the wall, and when he reached the road he turned his steps in this direction. On arriving within half a mile or so of the village, he stopped and spoke to a little boy who was driving home a cow, after which he entered the meadow on the right and made for the wood where the Ancient is buried. I waited till the boy came up to where I was, then asked what the pedler had said, and the boy told me that he had inquired for Jane M'Crea, to whom he wanted to sell some wares; and the little fellow added that he had informed the stranger that he might likely find you at Buckman's tavern, or at a large moss-covered rock in the wood, which the boy pointed out to him and where he said you often went towards evening. When I heard this, I hesitated whether to run here and warn you not to stir out of the house, or follow the villain and make sure that no harm befell you by keeping him in sight; for if I came here first and you happened to be at the rock, 'twould be too late before help reached you. I took the latter course; but before I entered the field he was almost across it, and as there was no stone-wall along which to glide unperceived, I was afraid that he would discover me following him, for twice he looked back. But as soon as he disappeared in the wood, I increased my speed and overtook him when he was within thirty yards of the rock. Fortunately, the noise he made among the bushes and briars prevented my footsteps from being heard, then squatting down behind a young cedar, I watched him closely, for he had satisfied himself that he was at the right spot, and was evidently going to lay in ambush for you.

"The first thing he did after hiding himself was to examine the noose and make sure that it would work right; then he pulled out a pistol and examined that too, and the sight of the weapon caused my skin to creep, and I might have run off only that I feared a bullet would overtake me, for, Miss Jenny, we were very close together, only twenty paces, and what is that for a pistol ball ?

"By-and-by the sun disappeared, and it grew damp, and I longed to have whatever was going to happen, happen; the suspense was most painful. Oh, what would I not have given for a rifle or a couple of stout bull-dogs!

"While I was suffering this mental agony the wood was growing darker and darker, and the temptation to get up and run was very great; but I did not. I held my ground, thank the Lord, and made up my mind to die rather than let him lay his hand on you.

"At length I heard footsteps, and at once the Hessian glided nearer to the rock; but I was too quick for him, and gave a tremendous shout; then rushed at him before he could draw his pistol. A terrible tussle followed, for he is a mighty strong man, and at length managed to pull the weapon out, but I knocked it into the cat-briars; then tried to trip him up, and I do believe that I should have succeeded only for the devilish noose which he slipped over my head. But that gave him the advantage, and with a violent jerk he pulled me after him into the wood. Oh, Miss Jenny, what were my feelings at that moment! I verily believed that my last hour had come, for he swore that he was going to hang me; indeed I was already half-strangled, my eyes were bursting out of the sockets, and my legs sinking under me, when that blessed varmint' came to the rescue. The wretch did not wait for a second discharge of the fluid, but dropped the rope quick as lightning and ran off as fast as he could, leaving me gasping and holding fast to a sapling. But I soon realized what had happened and, without losing any time, made my way here, where, thank the Lord, I find you safe and sound, and looking none the worse for the scare."

When Billy got through the account of his adventure, Jane was silent for a few minutes; her heart was too full to speak, and there were tears in her eyes. Then taking his hand, "I have no words," she said, "to express my gratitude. But for you I might not be here now; your devotion has saved my life."

"Well, you're the only being on earth that I'd take such risks for," returned Billy. "But what I did this evening I'd do again; aye, you'll ever find me ready to fight and die for you."

Without pursuing the subject further, Jane now took up the lamp and proceeded to examine the cut on his forehead. "This wound must be attended to," she said; "is it very painful?" He was about to answer when Mrs. M'Neil reappeared with her nose tightly clasped between her fingers, but as she flung open the window she kept her face towards him, and threw on him a soft and tender squint. Then, as well as she could with one hand free, she began to brew some punch.

While the good woman was thus employed, Jane M'Crea took Billy up stairs, where she made him change his damaged regimentals for an old suit which had belonged to Mr. Woodbury; then, having tossed his pants and coat out of the window, she washed the blood off his forehead and covered the gash with a piece of plaster.

"It's worth getting hurt to have you nurse me," he said when she got through; "I won't pity Knox a bit if he gets into the hospital." The girl smiled; then bade him go below and entertain Mrs. M'Neil.

Accordingly Billy descended to the parlor, where he found the table spread, the punch ready, and the dame walking solemnly around the room carrying a shovel, on which lay a handful of red-hot coals mixed with apple-parings.

"I deeply regret what has happened," he began, "but your disinfectant has made the place smell sweet as a nut; so put the shovel aside; if any odor sticks to the wall let it go to vex old Leech."

"'Tisn't on his account that I'm purifying the air," returned the widow sharply and striving to appear out of humor, while in truth her heart was palpitating with love; "as far as Leech is concerned, I think a dose of skunk would be beneficial. But it's for Jenny's sake I'm doing this; see how pale she is! One might suppose there wasn't any blood left in her body."

"Well, don't scold Mr. Smith," said the girl, who had entered unperceived; "praise him for his courage and devotion, for he has saved me from outrage and death."

At once Mrs. M'Neil ceased her perambulation round the room and, putting down the shovel, seized her admirer by the hands; then, with an expression which defies our pen to describe, "William Smith," she exclaimed, "if I was General Washington I'd make you a general afore another day passed by."

"I care not for honors; life for me has no more charms," returned Billy, with an inward chuckle and dropping his eyes to the floor.

"Then what fetched you away from camp to-day? Answer me that," continued the dame, who felt very like giving him a pinch.

"I wanted to take a parting look at one whom I adore, one who could make this cold world a paradise for me if she chose, but who, alas, has doomed me to misery."

"Well now, quit talking nonsense; didn't I scream out a while ago that I had forgiven you—aye, forgiven in downright earnest? You have saved Jenny's life, and you may prepare to call me Mrs. Smith instead of Mrs. M'Neil."

"Glory! glory!" cried Billy, clasping her in his arms and giving her a real bear's hug. Then drawing forth his Bible, he placed it in her hands with a solemn look: "Accept this sacred volume," he said, "as a pledge of our renewed betrothal. It has lost many leaves, torn out by bullets, for I carried it with me to Bunker Hill; but you mustn't mind that; plenty of leaves left."

"I accept it now willingly," said Mrs. M'Neil, "and shall cherish it all the more for the fire and blood it has gone through." Then lowering her tone, and with an arch expression, "but now tell me, why couldn't you manage to lose an arm or a leg and so get your discharge, then come home and let me nurse you?"

"A leg is a big thing to lose," answered her betrothed. "When a cannon ball carries it off 'tisin't easy

to stop the blood. At Bunker Hill I saw more than one poor fellow bleed to death from that cause."

"Well then an arm, Mr. Smith?"

"Humph! that's an important part of a man's body too. How could I ever give you a hug with only one arm?"

At this she blushed and tried to assume the virgin air of sweet sixteen, and with her devoted admirer the counterfeit coin passed for genuine and he thought he had never seen her look so innocent and bewitching before. "He has caged me," she murmured.

"Lord, don't I wish 'twas October!" he sighed.

While the fond pair were staring at each other, Jane playfully remarked that she believed Mr. Smith would not be kept from duty more than a couple of days by the wound on his forehead and that he might at once return to camp. "I'd not go back to-night even if George Washington ordered me," exclaimed Billy; "indeed I almost think that I ought to accompany you the whole way to your new home. You can't tell but what the Hessian may follow you there; he may be lurking around the house at this very moment."

"He may," said Jane, glancing uneasily at the window, then quickly taking her eyes off it, as if she dreaded lest some other face might show itself there. "But please don't tell Aaron what has happened this evening: 'twould do no good; on the contrary, 'twould worry him to death and he'd have no peace till I got back."

"And that will be—when?" inquired Billy.

"Towards the end of August."

"Good! good! and you must return with her, Mrs. M'Neil; oh do, then we'll all be married together; and hi, ho! how the punch will flow, in sweet October!"

"And Jenny by this time will have fresh roses on her cheeks," said the dame, who seemed to approve of the plan, "and captain Knox'll wish that she was an apple that he might eat her up."

"Good Aaron," murmured Jane, glancing again at the window; "I wish that I was not going away from

you." Then after shaking Billy's hand she withdrew, followed as she went up the staircase by the widow's voice, urging her to rise by cockcrow in the morning.

Long and fervently did the girl pray before she laid her head on her pillow, and prayer brought her some relief; still she could not sleep; all through the night she heard her faithful friend patrolling round the house and whenever the watch-dogs barked louder than usual she would fancy that Count von Meyer was lurking near.

CHAPTER XXX.

SUMMER is almost gone, and the army which King George has sent to subdue the patriots, is still closely besieged in Boston. Since the eighteenth of June neither side has attempted to bring on a general engagement; the British, who are in constant dread of an attack, have been anxiously waiting for reinforcements, while Washington, finding himself with a scant supply of powder, and at the head of an undisciplined mass of volunteers, has been content to maintain a bold front and to listen patiently and without murmuring to complaints of his inactivity.

The American force, however, presents a more soldierly appearance than when Jane M'Crea visited the camp two months ago. It is now divided into three grand divisions, each consisting of twelve regiments. The division which forms the left wing is at Winter hill, near the Mystic river, under the command of Major General Lee; the centre division under Putnam is at Cambridge, and the right wing is at Roxbury under Major General Ward. The officers have been commissioned anew by Congress, and on the twentieth of July, which was observed as a day of fasting and prayer, every Colonel read aloud to his men a chapter from the Bible, then exhorted them to stay true to the cause of Independence.

"Time flies," said Billy Smith to Knox, one even-

ing, the last of August, "and Miss Jenny ought to arrive soon. When she comes you must drill the company for her; she likes to see us go double-quick and about face and wheel and charge, and you know that we can drill twice as well as when she was here last."

Knox, whose arms were folded on his breast, made no response, and so Mr. Smith continued to babble:

"And I do wish 'Wash'—I—I mean Washington would give us a chance at the redcoats: why, we might as well be at home as here, so far as fighting goes: what's the use of powder if it isn't used?"

"Your spirit is excellent," said Knox, turning and gazing toward the road which led out of Cambridge: "but our Chief has doubtless good reasons for remaining inactive; be not hasty in criticising him. I promise you he'll give us fighting enough before peace is declared."

At this Billy's knees shook, and from the bottom of his heart he wished that he might lose a few of his fingers and then be honorably discharged: "Cap. is right," he said to himself; "there'll be the devil to pay afore I get out of this scrape—if I ever do; Oh Lord! Lord!" and he groaned, as he thought of Ike Shattuck, the negro, who had gone to his last rest near the frog-pond at Bunker Hill.

He was still oppressed by the memory of the bloody scene he had witnessed on the eighteenth of June, when suddenly he jumped into the air, clapped his hands, and shouted, "hurrah! here she comes! the villain didn't follow her, hurrah!" Sure enough, Jane M'Crea was in sight, and Aaron, whose eager eye had espied her as soon as his friend, was about to rush forward to meet her when he checked himself and inquired of Billy what he meant: "although I did not mention it," he said, "I overheard you twice during the past fortnight mutter something about Jenny which caused me to suspect that all was not right; has anything been concealed from me?"

"Well, yes, something has," replied Billy, looking very much confused; "I promised to hold my tongue

about it. But now I'll confess that Count von Meyer came near making Miss Jenny his prey the evening before she and Mrs. M'Neil left Lexington. She escaped however, without a scratch, and 'twas to spare you uneasiness that she made me promise to keep it a secret. For goodness sake don't let on that you know it; she has been so true in keeping my secrets that for all the world I'd not have her know I betrayed one of hers."

"And with the certainty that the hound was on her track once more, you allowed her to go off to New York without any protection except Mrs. M'Neil! oh, Billy, you are a fool!"

"Well, 'twas risky, cap.; but I put a broken scythe into the gig and advised her to buy the first gun she saw on the road, and now that she is back safe and sound, pray keep mum about what I have told you."

"I will," said Knox, hastening to meet his betrothed, "I'm too rejoiced to scold; thank the Lord she has escaped!" Presently the happy pair met.

"You see that I have kept my word," exclaimed Jane, smiling as she gave him both her hands. But such a greeting did not satisfy Aaron, who clasped her in his arms: "yes, yes, you have come with the katydids," he said; "but it seems a year since we parted." Then after he had embraced her, he held her off at arm's length and looking her full in the face, "only rosebuds yet," he continued, "and very tiny ones too; but they'll bloom into big roses soon. The journey has done you some good; hasn't it?"

"Oh, yes; but I am happier now than I have been since I went away."

"And safer too," rejoined Knox.

The girl made no response, but glanced nervously at Billy Smith, as if she feared that he had told him what had happened on the evening of the third of July. But Billy reassured her by a significant wink, then smacking his lips inquired after the widow; "why didn't she come with you?" he said, "October is almost here; why didn't she come?"

"Mrs. M'Neil sends you ever so much love," an-

swered Jane, "and may be expected in the course of a week; the reason why I did not stay and return with her is, that she would not let me; for there were rumors of hostile Indians having been seen in the neighborhood of Fort Edward, where she has bought a farm, and so she sent me away as soon as possible under the care of a hunter. But come, let us go sit on yonder mound of earth and I'll describe the beautiful country where I have been—the trout stream and the pretty log house." As she spoke she looked at Aaron, who took her hand and led her to the spot which she had pointed out.

"But before I begin," she said, when her betrothed and Mr. Smith had placed themselves one on each side of her, "let me ask if there is any news of Harry?"

"None," replied Knox; "but it is reported that all those who were captured at Bunker Hill have been confined aboard a prison-ship—a wretched old hulk, which is going to be towed to New York."

"Poor Harry!" sighed Jane, "what a fate! would that I were with you to console you!"

"Well, he is out of reach of bullets, anyhow," remarked Billy in a quiet way, as he stuffed a huge piece of tobacco into the hollow of his cheek.

"I'd rather have him take his chances in battle than linger for months aboard the prison ship and die at last of cold and hunger," said Jane.

"Don't know but what you're right," rejoined Billy; "nothing like a soldier's grave."

Here there was a pause for about a minute, after which the young woman went on to relate what she had seen and done since the morning of July the fourth.

"As you know," she said, addressing her betrothed, "Mr. Smith was at the tavern to bid us good-by, and one might have supposed that we were going to travel through an enemy's country, for he made us take a scythe with us—broken, 'tis true, but what there was left of the blade was sharp as a razor, and 'twould have fared ill with anybody who might have attacked us. But he declared that we were still not sufficiently armed,

so at the village where we halted for noon, I bought an old firelock with some powder and bullets, and thus protected we continued our way across the country to the province of New York. We were not bound to any particular spot; all that Mrs. M'Neil wanted was to get a long ways from Lexington. Well, after travelling a couple of days we fell in with a relative of hers, a pleasant old man, who said that he owned a farm up the Hudson river, about twenty-five or thirty miles from the south end of Lake Champlain, and as he assured us that the land was rich, and that there was a fort near by called Fort Edward, garrisoned by a company of militia, we concluded to go along with him. As we pursued our way I often cast my eyes on the landscape and imagined that this or that spot was your farm, Aaron; and certainly we passed many places that were just to your taste. But the most beautiful country I have yet seen is that where Mrs. M'Neil's relative is settled, and she has chosen a home next to his. 'Tis on a gentle slope, with a trout-stream running through the middle of it, and it has very few rocks."

"Is the stream big enough to turn a mill?" interrupted Billy.

"I should think so," answered the girl, with difficulty suppressing a smile: "and I doubt not that when the war is over you will build one there and do a thriving business."

"Pray the Lord your words may come true," muttered Billy: "a fellow ought to get some reward for risking his life at Bunker Hill—which, alas, may not be the last battle!"

"And for doing other brave acts," said Jane, throwing him a significant glance, "and rewarded you will be; aye, many happy years are before you."

Cheered by the confident way in which she spoke, he let her go on and finish the account of her journey without again interrupting her, and when she had got quite to the end, he rose and without saying a word walked away; for Billy, whatever we may think of him, was not devoid of delicate feeling and knew that the

young woman and her betrothed would rather be alone together the rest of the evening.

When he was gone Knox proposed to Jane that they should take a stroll towards Cambridge. Accordingly they got up from the mound and arm and arm walked along under the elms, whose spreading branches formed a perfect arch over the road. "What sweet moments these are!" he said. "But, dear Jenny, you are tired, 'tis selfish in me to keep you out of doors at this hour; you must need repose."

"Well, yes I do," said Jane, "but you have been a long time without me." "A long time," repeated Knox; "Oh, I have indeed. I saw the blackbirds flock, the fire-flies disappear, the grain turn yellow and fall under the sickle; but at last the katydids have come."

"Yes, they have come, listen," and as the girl spoke, she gazed up into a shadowy space overhead and thought that there was something weird and solemn in the cry of the insects.

"And when they have gone," continued Aaron, "look out for chestnuts and blue jays and our wedding-day!"

"Yes, our wedding-day," repeated Jane, forcing herself to speak in a cheerful tone. Suddenly she was roused from the ghostly thoughts which were crowding upon her, by the sound of drums, and she inquired eagerly what it meant. "Ha! 'tis a sign that we are becoming real soldiers," answered Knox: "the drums are beating tattoo. When you were here a few months ago we went to our tents in the evening pretty much when we pleased; we were literally volunteers. But General Washington is gradually moulding us into an army, and although many grumble and declare that when their time of service expires they will not re-enlist, depend upon it we need just such a man at our head. He doesn't swear like Putnam, nor try to have things done by coaxing; he gives an order and it must be obeyed."

"Yet with all his strict discipline he is a kind, fatherly man," said Jane; "my brief interview with

him satisfied me that he is no tyrant: let us hope the people will have wisdom enough to value him at his worth."

"I am sure the majority will," said Knox; "but there are many who have only sufficient brains to be fault-finders, and these call him an aristocrat because he does not shake hands with everybody he meets, and believe that he is lacking in courage because he lets the army remain inactive. Ha! if he had the powder he'd make them sing a different tune." In a few minutes more they entered the village of Cambridge, where Jane had taken a lodging with one of Mrs. M'Neil's acquaintances, and after seeing her safe to the door Aaron bade her good night, then hastened back to camp.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE morning after Jane M'Crea's return from New York, she was favored with an early visit from Billy Smith. He was alone, and apologized for coming at such an hour—six o'clock:

"But if I had waited till later," he said, "cap. would have come with me and I'd not have had you all to myself; but now he is drilling his company, and so will not hear our conversation."

These opening remarks troubled Jane a little, for she feared from the tone and manner of her friend that he had something to communicate about Count von Meyer. "Well, what I want to find out," he continued, after taking a chair next to her, is whether you saw or heard anything more of this villainous Hessian; for let me tell you that every day you were gone I imagined all kinds of horrid things and once I had half a mind to desert and follow after you. But he didn't show himself, did he?"

"No, and I mean to try and forget that there is such a being in existence," replied Jane.

"I don't know if that is wise," pursued Billy, shak-

ing his head ; " he's a bad hound to get on anybody's track ; these troublesome times, when the menfolk are all away from home, favor him very much ; and take my word for it, there is no harm in thinking a great deal about him. However, if you'd rather I'd not talk about the wretch, I won't." The girl sighed and made no response, then assuming such a comic air that despite herself she could not keep from smiling, " tell me," he continued, " what do you think of my regimentals? "

" Are they the same you wore that evening when you saved my life? " inquired Jane.

" The very same ; I kept 'em underground a fortnight and a day, and when I dug 'em up I found 'em, as you perceive, as good as new. Really, 'tis a capital plan when a fellow gets tired of his clothes, to hide 'em awhile, then when he goes to put 'em on again they'll look as if he had never seen 'em afore. As for smell, why if there is any at all about my garments, it's rather a pleasant one ; the trousers have a taint of sassafras, 'cause I wrapped 'em round the roots of a sassafras tree, and there was a muskrat hole close by where I buried my coat ; so you see I've got sassafras and musk mixed together, and cap. said yesterday that I had been buying perfumery."

Here Jane ran her hand along his coat and observing that she was giving it a sharp scrutiny, " I tell you," he exclaimed, " the earth hasn't hurt it one bit ; in this world there are two kinds of dirt—clean dirt and dirty dirt, and pure soil is always nice and sweet."

" I quite agree with you," said Jane ; " and I once heard the Ancient make the same remark."

" Well now, I confess, the idea isn't original with me," continued Billy, grinning and scratching his head : " Queer old man, that Mr. Woodbury ! wasn't he? So full of odd notions, guess we'll never meet his like again."

" Never! " sighed Jane, turning and gazing out of the window. Presently, she bade her friend come and see what was going on in the street.

"I wonder what has happened?" she said. "The people seem very much excited; what can be the matter?"

Mr. Smith, after looking out a moment, turned white as a sheet, then declared that he was no wiser than herself.

"Well, perhaps the enemy has made an attack," pursued Jane; "see! there goes General Putnam riding off as fast as he can, and a crowd of officers with him; oh, Billy, hasten to your regiment; do."

The idea that a battle was imminent had occurred to Mrs. M'Neil's betrothed as soon as it had to Jane M'Crea, and now while he tottered down the staircase he leaned heavily against the bannisters; but knowing that the girl was close at his heels, he groaned, "I hope it is a battle; Glory! Glory!" Then when he got to the street he stopped a wagon that was passing by, and having helped Jane into it told the lad who was driving to go as fast as possible to the camp of the Second Massachusetts regiment.

"Well, I guess you'd better let me take you down to the beach to see the fight 'tween the British and American man of war," returned the youth; "the whole town is going there; better go too."

The effect which these words produced on Mr. Smith was electric: up he jumped at least twenty-four inches off the hard board seat, then as he came down again with a thump, "Lord! what a pity," he cried, "that I'm not going to have a crack at the redcoats!"

"You'll have cracks enough at 'em afore long," remarked the driver, with a faint grin.

"Aye, so I shall," said Billy, trying hard to look fierce, "so I shall." Then snatching the whip out of the other's hand, he urged on the nag at such a furious rate that in less than three-quarters of an hour they found themselves on the sea-shore about half a mile south of Dorchester Point, where a crowd of soldiers were already gathered and among them of course was Knox, who was not long in discovering his betrothed. Then having adjusted his spy-glass to her focus, he watched

her with a throbbing heart as she gazed through it. The excitement and the brisk breeze from the southwest soon gave her cheeks a bright glow, and as the wind tossed about her long raven hair, more eyes than his were fixed upon her in admiration.

"It's the Hannah, sure as I'm alive it is!" cried Jane, when she had looked a moment through the glass.

"Well, that's what I've been telling our colonel," said Knox; "Captain Broughton said that she had two masts and a topsail. But three against one is wrong odds; blow, winds, blow!" And blowing it was half a gale; the sparkling billows which rolled from the southwest were breaking along the beach with a tremendous roar and you might have thought they were trying to answer the guns booming far to windward. The Falcon, the Somerset and the Marlborough, with every stitch of canvas spread, were bowling along after the American schooner, their great black hulls moving majestically over the ocean, while the small craft which carried the Stars and Stripes was running, as sailors say, 'bow-under,' her sharp, narrow hull disappearing every now and then entirely from view as the waves closed around her. On, on, nearer and nearer they were approaching the land; at length you were able to distinguish three large rents in the topsail of the Hannah and even as Jane was counting them to Aaron, her hand trembling so that she could scarcely hold the glass, a shot from the Falcon, which was the nearest ship of the enemy, made a fourth split in the canvas. In a few minutes another cannon boomed and before its hollow voice died away, the foretop-mast of the gallant little craft went by the board, and at once a loud, despairing cry arose from the spectators and Jane's eyes filled with tears. But although the Hannah's speed was checked by this misfortune, it staggered her only for a moment; the gigantic wave, that was following close behind her, swept over her deck, carrying off the boatswain and five of the crew, then up to the surface she rose again, shook off the spray and foam like a duck, and with flag still

flying at the mainsail a peak, ploughed her way towards the breakers as if nothing had happened. The chase was now become more exciting than ever: how near the shore would the Hannah dare to come? Already less than a mile separated her from it; was it not full time for her to change her course? A little closer and with such a breeze blowing, she must inevitably be dashed to pieces on the rocks, whose dark, frowning heads peeped up here and there above the water. But even if she were to put about, could she gain an offing with the enemy between herself and the broad sea?

"If anybody commanded that 'ere schooner but Bob Broughton, of Marblehead, I'd say she was as good as lost," spoke a voice close by the wagon. "But Bob knows every foot of this coast as well as I know my barnyard, and I bet a barrel of cider to a peck of peanuts that he'll carry her safe past the reef and through the narrow opening in the bar, and then he can beach her without any trouble, and all he'll have to do afterwards will be to give her bottom a new coat of paint."

"Well, I hope he won't run into my lobster pots," said Billy Smith, who had joined Knox and his betrothed. This remark provoked a hearty laugh from all who heard it, but Billy, who was in sober earnest, went on to declare that he had lobsters enough in his pots to feast a regiment, and he was pointing out to Aaron the spot where they were anchored, when suddenly a cry of joy interrupted him; the frigates had given up the chase, and turning abruptly away, Knox made haste to shake Jane M'Crea's hand and congratulate her on what he as well as everybody else supposed was the certain escape of the privateer.

But soon the cry of exultation died away and a deep silence followed; the multitude scarcely breathed, so intense was the excitement; for the schooner, which had indeed escaped from the clutches of the enemy, was now almost upon the rocks, which seemed to rise higher and higher out of water as she approached them; the breakers dashed upon the bar with a wilder roar, the wind blew harder than ever. On! on! the

gallant little vessel was coming—coming to her doom ; no, nothing could save her now, at least so everybody believed except Jane M'Crea and the stranger who had expressed his boundless faith in Bob Broughton, of Marblehead. See, see how she yaws ! To broach to for one instant with such a mountain wave chasing her will be sure destruction ! One—two—three rocks are already passed ; look ! up goes her centre-board ; into the foaming breakers she plunges—she strikes ! No, no, she doesn't ! on still she comes. Blow wind ! roar breakers ! grin and frown, ye rocks ! Too late, she has braved and baffled you all, and now, greeted by thousands of voices, the Hannah glides into the calm water between the bar and the beach, smashing and sinking a score of lobster pots ; then before Billy Smith can recover from his indignation, down go mainsail and jib and in another moment she rests her bow upon her native shore as gently as a girl might lay her head on the pillow.*

It would be difficult to describe the scene which followed ; the vast multitude charged down the sand-hills as if every one were trying to reach the vessel first ; such shouts, such cheers had never been heard before on the coast of old Massachusetts, and while the soldiers were charging upon the Hannah, her deck suddenly swarmed with men. Like bees out of a hive they poured through the hatchway, and though pale and haggard and scarcely able to stand, they would not wait for any friendly hands to help them, but overboard they jumped, some into water up to their waists, and before Knox could recover from his astonishment at this strange sight, Jane M'Crea was clasping a youth in her arms. Then as soon as he got a chance, he too gave Harry a hearty embrace, and so did Billy Smith, and if they cried for joy, we cannot wonder at them.

“Hooray, for my lobster pots !” exclaimed the jubilant Billy ; “I ‘sot’ ’em right on the channel and

* See *Beaching of Capt. Manly's Ship when chased by the Falcon*, Bradford's *Hist. of Mass.* p. 75.

that's what made Captain Broughton steer so true. I don't care if they're all smashed, hooray! hooray!"

"And where is Captain Broughton? Oh, where is he?" said Jane. Hardly had she spoken when a gruff voice called out, "Ship ahoy, my witch! ship ahoy!" and turning round she saw him coming towards her, looking like a fright indeed; his hat gone, his pea-jacket torn in tatters, his curly hair clotted on one side with blood, and at his waist the same cutlass which he had worn on the nineteenth of April.

And well might he look wild and fierce; a tempest cannot subside all at once, and it had been no child's play to board the *Scorpion* in the dead of the night, guarded as she was by three men-of-war, to fight his way along her deck with his crew, to overpower the marines and sailors who fought with true British pluck, then after rescuing the American prisoners who were confined in the hold, to escape the vigorous pursuit of the *Falcon*, *Somerset*, and *Marlborough*.

"Brave man!" said Jane, as she let him press his lips to her cheek. "God bless and reward you for what you have done?"

"Well, I thought of you when I was making the blood fly last night," returned Broughton. "But bloody as it was, 'twas grand work; hand to hand—cut and slash—bang, bang, bang for about ten minutes. But by that time the Britishers that we hadn't spitted we tossed into the sea, then in the twinkling of an eye the hatches were broken open, and you know the rest of the story."

"And how many men did you lose?" inquired Jane.

"Nineteen, counting the boatswain and five who were swept overboard by a wave, while we were scudding for the land. But they'll come up again some day; I believe in resurrections." Then putting his mouth close to her ear, "I've a good cargo of powder," he whispered; "won't Washington be glad?"

"Oh, he will indeed; pray how did you get it?"

"From a merchantman that I met about a week

ago, while I was cruising along the coast. You see, I hoisted the British flag, then went aboard to pay, what the captain thought, a friendly visit; and when I got on the deck of his vessel I locked him and his crew up until I had transferred the powder to the Hannah; ha, ha, ha!"

"And then you let him sail away?"

"Oh, no, indeed; he rowed away in his small boats while the ship was set on fire. But you mustn't think that that is all I've done since we parted in July; why, the first shot from my swivel gun knocked such a tremendous hole in a bark, that she went down with all hands afore I could save a single soul; and I've done the same thing to half a dozen other vessels. War is war, and I like to do my work thoroughly." When he finished speaking, Harry took his sister's hand and whispered that he wished to say something to her apart. But the mariner seized her by the other hand and vowed that he should not let her go; "stand fast," said he; "don't leave me yet; I want to pay another visit to General Washington, and I can't go to headquarters without you."

"Well now, that's cool," interrupted Billy Smith; "Not satisfied with scattering and ruining my lobster pots, you must bother Miss Jenny to go here, there and everywhere, with you." Captain Broughton turned and gave the speaker a look dark as a hurricane; but Billy only grinned, then went on to say that having no drill till the afternoon he was quite willing to show him the way to headquarters.

Again Harry whispered to his sister, while at the same time his face wore an air of strange excitement which she observed with alarm; "I have something important to tell you," he said, "but it must be when we are alone; come, come." As he spoke she trembled and thought of the heartless being who had already made her life so unhappy. Had Count von Meyer wrought some horrible vengeance on Helen Jones for the kindness which she had shown to herself and her brother? And now, while she strolls off with Harry

towards the pinewood, let us turn our attention for a moment to a newspaper which Broughton has handed to Knox, but which the latter would fain not read at present—his eye is following his betrothed, and he feels not a little curiosity to know why she has left him so abruptly.

“I know General Washington will be glad to get this paper,” said the mariner; “It comes from North Carolina and is pretty well soaked with salt water, but it contains glorious news which ought to be read aloud; and you have a good voice, so read, read!”

The Journal, which was very little larger than a pocket-handkerchief, was the Cape Fear Mercury, and contained the account of a great meeting held at Charlotte, Mecklenburg county, North Carolina, in the last week of May; and nothing could better show how deeply the heart of the country had been moved by the fight at Lexington, than the defiant coming together of the people who dwelt in the remote region between the Yadkin and the Catawba.

“Well, yes, I’ll read,” said Knox, after glancing his eye over the page, “for ’tis worth hearing, and may the Continental Congress follow the example of North Carolina!” Then after another pause and glancing again at the retreating figure of his betrothed, he began:

“Whereas, By an address presented to his majesty by both Houses of Parliament in February last, the American Colonies are declared to be in a state of actual rebellion, we conceive that all laws and commissions confirmed by or derived from the authority of the king and parliament are annulled and vacated, and the former civil constitution of these colonies for the present wholly suspended. Therefore Resolved:

1st. That whoever directly or indirectly abetted, or in any way, form, or manner, countenanced the unchartered and dangerous invasion of our rights, as claimed by Great Britain, is an enemy to this country—to America—and to the inherent and inalienable rights of man.

2d. That we, the citizens of Mechlenburg county, do hereby dissolve the political bonds which have connected us to the mother country, and hereby absolve ourselves from all allegiance to the British crown, and abjure all political connection, contract, or association with that nation, who have wantonly trampled on our rights and liberties, and inhumanly shed the blood of American patriots at Lexington.

3d. That we do hereby declare ourselves a free and independent people : are, and of right ought to be, a sovereign and self-governing association, under the control of no power, other than that of our God, and the general government of the Congress ; to the maintenance of which independence we solemnly pledge to each other our mutual co-operation, our lives, our fortunes, and our most sacred honor.

4th. That as we acknowledge the existence and control of no law or legal officer, civil or military, within this county, we do hereby ordain and adopt as a rule of life, all, each, and every of our former laws ; wherein nevertheless, the crown of Great Britain never can be considered as holding rights, privileges, immunities, or authority therein.

5th. That it is also further decreed, that all, each, and every military officer in this county is hereby retained in his former command and authority, he acting conformably to these regulations. And that every member present of this delegation shall henceforth be a civil officer, viz., a justice of the peace, in the character of a 'committee-man,' to issue process, hear and determine all matters of controversy, according to said adopted laws ; and to preserve peace, union, and harmony in said county ; and to use every exertion to spread the love of country and fire of freedom throughout America, until a more general organized government be established in this province." *

"Three cheers for North Carolina !" cried Broughton, as soon as Knox had finished reading.

* The above resolutions were passed May 31, 1775 : more than a year previous to the Federal Declaration of Independence.

"Aye, three cheers!" said a number of voices, and at once the crowd who had been listening, tossed their hats into the air and gave three such loud huzzas that the sound was carried by the wind far over the sand-hills, and General Putnam, who was riding back to camp, raised himself in his stirrups and gave a cheer too, for the old fellow was ever in the humor for such things, and even his oaths had a smack of fun and hilarity about them.

"And now for headquarters," said the mariner, addressing Billy Smith: "the Hannah is hard and fast on the beach, and with the wind from the southwest she'll stay there forever, so come." With this, he clapped Mrs. M'Neil's lover on the shoulder and off they both went, the best friends in the world, while Knox followed at a slower gait.

Let us now return to Harry M'Crea and his sister, who are already almost at the pine-wood.

"Well, what is it that you wish to tell me?" inquired the latter eagerly, and as soon as they were out of hearing of the crowd. "Is it anything about Count von Meyer? What has he done to Helen Jones? The brute is capable of anything; quick, don't keep me in suspense."

"Oh 'tis not of him I am going to speak," said the youth, "but of the dead come to life!"

At these words Jane stopped and gazed at Harry with a look of wonder and dismay. Had he suddenly gone mad? What could he mean? The dead come to life!

"Aye, you well may stare," he continued; "it is a resurrection indeed; I thought that I had killed him; but God be praised, I had not! David is alive—he is coming to Boston—he may be there now." At these startling words she fell back a step and stood for a moment like one petrified. Then quick the blood rushed to her cheeks, her eyes kindled with bright fire, and gazing up into the blue sky, you might have fancied that she saw there a vision of heaven—so full of rapture was her countenance.

"I did not want to reveal this in the presence of Knox," continued Harry, "for he has told me that you are now his betrothed."

At the mention of Aaron's name the look of unutterable joy vanished from her face, and pressing her hand to her brow, "oh God!" she groaned, "what is coming?"

"Well, Knox is an honest man," pursued Harry, taking her arm and drawing her gently along; "he promised to keep you safe for David; he has done it, and now like a true friend he will surrender you to him."

"No doubt he will; good, faithful Aaron! 'Tis his very generosity and nobleness of character which strike me so deep. Already I feel the wound I must cause him; for Harry, believe me, although I once rejected Aaron Knox, he is a man in a million."

"So he is, Jenny, so he is; and for that very reason he'll not act like a child when he hears the news. Oh, where is the joyous look that I saw a moment ago? Think of David, alive and coming to claim you as his own! Oh think of him and smile, and let this day be a day of unmixed happiness for both of us."

At the mention of David's name all her rapture returned, and pressing her brother's hand she urged him to tell her more about the youth.

"Well, I have told you all that I know," said Harry, "and depend on it if he has arrived in Boston, nothing will deter him from soon crossing the lines to visit you; no, nothing."

"Oh, too sweet, too delightful to think of!" exclaimed Jane. Then after a pause; "and yet, no, he had better not come; he might be arrested as a spy, rather let me go to him."

"You to him!" and Harry as he spoke, gazed at her with astonishment.

"Yes, love knows no walls. I would go anywhere to be with David; I wish now that I had followed him to Ticonderoga."

In a few minutes they reached the pine forest, when

the girl stopped, and after musing a moment requested her brother to go back and find Knox and break to him the news: "It has to be done," she said, "and might as well be done at once; I can find my way alone to Cambridge." To this Harry did not object, but before he went he urged her not to become troubled again about Aaron. "He is a strong man," he said, "and can bear a great deal; so keep the joyful look on your face; it makes you what you used to be in the bright days before the war." With this he turned away, and with a heart overflowing with happiness, went to tell Aaron Knox his fate.

CHAPTER XXXII.

JANE remained for nearly half an hour at the spot where her brother had left her; the expression of her face changed more than once from joy to sadness, and the thought of the unhappiness which she was going to bring Aaron Knox came to her with a sharper pang than before.

"Oh, would," she sighed, "that I might forget you, and that you might forget me!" Then she would wonder if she were not awakening from a dream; but no, there in plain view were Harry's footsteps, and he had certainly told her that David was alive. No, no, it was no dream, but a sweet, a glorious reality! Still the thought of Knox troubled her very much; perhaps as soon as he heard the news he might hasten to find her and offer to take her himself to the British lines and having summoned David Jones, deliver her to him: "'Twould be just like Aaron," she said; "though his heart might break, he would do it; he is one in a million."

At length she turned and entered a path which seemed to lead in the direction of Cambridge. But when she had followed it a short distance she again halted, then seating herself on a fallen tree, began to

listen. But she heard no footsteps ; the silence of the pine forest was unbroken by the voice of bird or squirrel, nothing reached her ear but the wild moaning of the surf. And as she sat there all by herself, she thought of Josiah Woodbury and of the happy hours which she had spent with him and wished that she could have him back. Then she thought of Count von Meyer and of the vow which he had made to follow her wherever she might go. She remembered how narrowly she had escaped him once ; where was he at this moment ? Might he not be lurking near ? And as she pictured to herself his artful, unscrupulous face, his glittering, malignant eye, not even the hope of soon meeting David could keep her heart from throbbing with fear. Suddenly she heard footsteps ; yes, somebody was approaching, and rising from her seat, she was about to flee when a well known voice cried, " stay, stay ; don't go away from me ; let me speak with you," then before she could utter a word Knox, was at her side. " Jenny, you are trembling," he exclaimed, as he took her hand and gazed upon her with a look more tender than she had ever seen on his face before ; " why are you hiding here among these gloomy pines ? In times like these 'tis dangerous to be so far from camp all by yourself. And you are sad ! what is the matter ? After what Harry has told you, you ought to be the happiest girl in all Massachusetts."

As he spoke his own face brightened, but the smile upon it was forced and ghostly. " Yes, dear David is alive," she murmured. " And I am ready to deliver to him my precious charge," continued Aaron. " There is no merit in doing it ; I am only keeping my word."

" How different you are from others !" said Jane, astonished at the calmness of his tone, for she felt sure by his eyes that he had been weeping, " I know how sincerely you love me. Oh, would that I had two hearts ! How quickly I would give you one !"

" I believe you ; but you have only one heart," and as he spoke, he let go her hand and his head dropped on his breast. For more than a minute neither of them

opened their lips, and louder and sadder than before was the moaning of the waves as they rolled upon the beach.

"But never mind, never mind!" exclaimed Knox, suddenly looking up. "Josiah Woodbury lost his first and only love; I can be like him. But, Jenny, pray for me; ask of God to give me patience and resignation. For some, life is far too short, for others 'tis far too long. Ask of the Lord to shield me from despair; Oh, I would rather have your prayers than the prayers of anybody else."

"And He will hear my prayer," said Jane; "He will not let my future years be darkened by the thought that my union with another had driven all happiness away from you; no, live and be great. Think what a field there is in America for one of your metal! Whatever flint is in you—and I know that there is plenty of it—must strike fire in such stirring times as these; and as you rise and become famous, no one will be so proud of you as Jane M'Crea." "Live and become famous;" oh how full of mockery did these words sound to Aaron Knox. "A beggar, an outcast, hated by all mankind, all would still be sunshine for me if I had you at my side," he said to himself, as he gazed in her sweet blue eyes. "But now, ambition is a vile worm which I have crushed forever; I have had my joyous days, bright and soul-thrilling they were; they have come, and like the summer they have gone." Then raising his voice, "but, Jenny," he continued, "I will serve my country with as much zeal as ever, for your sake I will, and by my blind obedience to your wishes, prove my everlasting devotion." He had just uttered these words when they both turned to see who was coming, for they had heard a shout, and it seemed close by. In another moment, who should they see running towards them but Billy Smith, with a musket on his shoulder and a pair of pistols in his waist.

"Good! good!" he cried, as soon as he caught a glimpse of them through the pines; "I was afraid something had happened to you, Miss Jenny; but

thank the Lord you are safe." The girl knew what he meant, and anxious to drive away all thought of Count von Meyer, asked him as soon as he reached her side where he had left Captain Broughton.

"Well, we had got about half way to camp when we met Wash—Washington, I mean, and he and Broughton got talking together at once; never knew the General make so free afore—guess there must be good news of some kind, for he was smiling like a sunflower. Then—" here our friend stopped to catch his breath, for he had been running fast, and when he was about to go on, Jane thanked him and bade him, without saying another word, show her the way to Cambridge.

Accordingly, Mr. Smith shouldered his musket and obeyed, wondering not a little at the curt way she had interrupted him; but he liked her too well to mind anything she might say or do, and in less than three minutes he was whistling a merry tune. "Isn't it jolly?" he said, after walking a short distance and forgetting that she had asked him to keep silent, "isn't it jolly? Summer is gone and September is here."

"Hi, ho! how the punch will flow in sweet October. Yes, next month is wedding-month, Miss Jenny; just think of it!" and so he went on whistling and talking and making the forest ring with his laughter.

Oh, well it was that he did not look around at the couple who were following close behind him: for, whatever Billy's faults, he had a kind heart and the compassion and trouble marked upon their faces would have pained him deeply.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

ABOUT a week after Billy Smith's morning visit to Jane M'Crea, he came again to her lodging in Cambridge, and as before at a very early hour. He

found her unusually cheerful, and as he had heard by this time the happy news of David Jones, he naturally enough attributed her high spirits to no other cause. But here he was mistaken, for great as had been her joy at what might almost be called David's resurrection from the tomb, we remember that the thought of blighting the future happiness of Aaron Knox, who loved her with all his heart and soul, had thrown a shadow over those moments of bliss. But now the dread that Knox would give himself up to vain grief and despair had left her; his strong will had succeeded in obliterating the faintest sign of the deep wound which his heart had received, and only the day before the present visit of Mr. Smith, he had hastened to inform Jane that General Washington was going to make him a member of his body-guard.

"Oh, yes, my prayer has been heard; Aaron will live and become famous, and no one will be so proud of him as I," were the words which escaped her lips just as Billy entered the room, and we may truly say that the world had never seemed so beautiful to her as it did on that September morning: The Hessian—the pine knoll—the haunted mirror—the serpent in the garden—the dark presentiment of something horrible approaching did not trouble her now, all, all had vanished from her thoughts as she sat by the window breathing the fresh air and with the glorious sunbeams streaming in upon her.

"But Billy soon undeceived her about Knox, and revealed that he was suffering none the less acutely for appearing so calm and resigned to his fate. "I have come," said Mrs. M'Neil's betrothed, after he had taken a chair beside her, "to have a plain talk with you about Cap: the fact is I'm getting worried about him. In the daytime he seems as well and reasonable as any of us, and the working party, that has been unloading the powder from the Hannah, wouldn't have sweated half so hard, if they had been under the command of any other officer. But cap. is so full of enthusiasm that we do more for him than for any body else. But at night,

after tattoo has beaten, and when we're all lying in our tents, what d'you think he does?"

"What, what?" said Jane, her voice quivering.

"Why, he gets up and walks back and forth in front of his tent, muttering to himself dear knows what and gazing at the stars. Indeed, I can truly say that for the past three nights he has hardly had a wink of sleep. And, Miss Jenny, although I haven't been able to make out exactly what it is he keeps muttering in those lonely walks, I'm pretty sure it is losing you makes him act so strangely. Yes, he loves you to distraction; and now, Miss Jenny, I've come here this morning not to make you unhappy by telling you this—" the girl had buried her face in her hands and Billy fancied that he saw a tear drop down from between her fingers—"but to hold a council of war with you and perhaps, between us, we may hit at a remedy for caps.' despair—you see I like to call things by their names: it's despair, nothing else." Here he put a fresh piece of tobacco in his mouth, then went on: "Now, Miss Jenny, love is a queer thing, the very queerest, perhaps, in the whole world. Most everybody gets afflicted with it sometime or other: I'm at this moment dying to marry you know who, and thank the Lord, October will soon be here; why, I can hardly sleep at night for thinking of next month, and I do believe if Mrs. M'Neil were to break off the match again I'd jump into the Mystic river. Nevertheless, I've got an idea that love is a thing that can be cured if you only go the right way to work. When anything hinders the two parties 'jining' together, the man flares up and makes a fool of himself. I'm frank enough to confess it. There's a thunderstorm inside of him, the lightning flashes and the rain pours down like a deluge and you might think that he was going to drown himself in tears. But by and by the clouds break, out comes the sun again, and he feels all the better for a good scouring. And 'twould be so with cap. if he'd only let himself loose; but he's not like other men—he won't give the clouds a chance to blow away.

Still, we can blow 'em away for him ; yes, we can, and now here's what we'll do ; we'll find him another wholesome ' gal '—not as good as yourself, for that can't be ; but a charm-loving, patch-sewing gal, and there's lots of 'em around ; I wouldn't haggle about what sort of a face she had, for it's a downright truth, Miss Jenny, that one virtuous female anywhere under forty is as good as another ; throw a sheet over their heads and you couldn't tell 'em apart."

When he had finished speaking, Jane uncovered her face and looked fixedly at him a moment, as if to see if he were in earnest, then shaking her head : " No," she said, " one virtuous woman is not as good as another, nor is one man, though he be equally brave and handsome, as good as another man. This thing which we call love, this clinging of one heart to another heart, is a deep, unfathomable mystery. I am much affected by what you tell me about Aaron ; he is very like me in some respects, and I know that if David Jones had really been what I thought he was—among the dead, I should never have met another youth to love as I loved David. Alas ! I wish I could share your hopes about Aaron."

" Well now, Miss Jenny, my plan has common sense in it ; your notion of love is altogether exalted. Why, if Mrs. M'Neil were to die d'you think I'd really drown myself in the Mystic river ? I might go to the bank but I'd not jump in, or if I did I'd swim. But I'd cry, of course I would, and the thunder storm would rage inside of me ; then when 'twas all over I'd come to you and say, " Miss Jenny, can't you hunt me up somebody else ? A miller's or a wheelwright's daughter—somebody whose father would like to have a stout pair of hands to keep in the mill or the shop, and who would take care of his child and his property when he'd be laid in the church-yard ? "

" Hey day ! what's this I hear about church-yards ? " cried a voice outside the door, which was only half closed, and while they were staring in that direction, who should enter but Mrs. M'Neil ! At once Jane and

Billy sprang up from their seats, but while the former flew to meet the dame, the latter hung back and wished that his tongue were cut off. "If she heard me," he groaned, "then I'll have to do my own patching and sewing to the end of my days, and the new farm'll be ploughed and harrowed by somebody else."

But presently, after giving the girl a hearty embrace, the widow stretched out her hand—which had always been fat and red, but which was much fatter and redder since her trip to Fort Edward—and grasped his with such warmth that his doubt and anxiety vanished; it was clear that she had not heard him. Then while they shook hands, "I was thinking of you only a moment ago," he said, with well feigned emotion; "October is not four weeks off; Hi, ho! how the punch will flow, in sweet October!"

"It will so," returned the dame, squinting affectionately at him; "I'm a caged bird, Mr. Smith, and I'm glad of it, for you're a hero." Then addressing Jane, "and I suppose your lover is just as impatient? yes, Knox must be longing for October." Without making any response, the girl turned and gazed out of the window, and Mrs. M'Neil, who saw that something was the matter, gave Billy an inquiring look. "If I were to lose you," he answered in a whisper, "you know how I'd feel. Well, cap. has lost her, for David Jones isn't dead; and she's going to marry him, and although she's full of joy, she still can't help feeling for poor cap., who takes it dreadful hard."

"David alive!" cried Mrs. M'Neil, in such a loud voice that people might have heard her in the street. Then throwing her arms around the girl's neck, "oh, my, my; you're a happy being, Jane M'Crea! Such luck don't happen often. David was always my favorite, and the punch that I'll brew for his wedding will make your hair curl; ha, ha, ha!"

At these words the shadow passed from the girl's face, and pressing her hands to her breast, "oh yes," she exclaimed, "David is coming, he is coming! I'll see him soon."

"But perhaps he'll not be able to cross the lines," remarked Billy; "and if he does he may be taken for a spy."

"Then I will go to him; nothing shall henceforth separate us." "Well spoken," said the widow, slapping her on the shoulder; "and afore you are with him twenty-four hours," added Billy, "he'll melt under your sweet blue eyes and 'jine' our side."

"Whether he does or not, shall not alter my purpose; true to him I will remain, no matter under what flag he fights, and I know he'll love me none the less for cherishing the cause of independence." "None the less," repeated Mrs. M'Neil; "and as for Gordon Knox, I'll fix him all right: I'll get him somebody else that'll churn and spin and mend his clothes and keep the pot boiling and"—here she was interrupted by a sudden cry from Billy Smith, who was looking out of the window, and when they approached to see what was the matter he turned round and with a pale agitated face, kept Jane back at arms length. "What has happened?—oh, tell me," she cried, striving to break down his guard; "tell me what has happened? Is it David? Let me look."

"Yes 'tis he, and he is handcuffed," answered Billy in a solemn voice: "and what is worse, he is not in uniform." As he spoke he caught Jane by the wrist for he feared that she was going to rush out of the room.

But she did not stir, the dreadful truth that David had crossed the lines to visit her and been arrested as a spy, smote her to the very soul; his doom was sealed; nothing could save him, no, nothing; already voices in the street were crying out, "hang him! hang him!" It was all she heard; her brain reeled and in another moment she lay senseless at Billy's feet.

Mrs. M'Neil's distress was very great, for she had never known the girl to be seized in this way before, and throwing herself on her knees beside her, she began to moan and wring her hands, while Mr. Smith sighed, "how will this end? How will this end?"

"Yes, how will this end?" repeated the widow, "poor Jenny! poor Jenny!"

"Well, she is only in a faint and 'tis not about her that I'm worried," continued Billy; "she'll be all right in a little while; but David Jones may be hung for coming here in disguise; and that is a serious matter."

"Well, hurry down and see what you can do for him; I'll take care of the girl; yes, go quick, then return as soon as possible, and I'll let her hear just as much of the news as I think she can bear." Mr. Smith obeyed and in a few minutes was mingling with the excited throng that was following the prisoner to headquarters.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE third day after the arrest of David Jones, Knox and Harry M'Crea might have been seen, walking arm in arm a short distance from the camp, conversing earnestly together. Aaron's countenance bore traces of intense suffering, and contrasted strangely with that of his companion, which ever and anon lit up with a look of wild, fierce joy.

"And so you passed a quarter of an hour with him this afternoon?" said the former.

"Yes, and he wondered why you did not accompany me."

"Oh, I'm very glad that I did not; the interview would have been too painful." "It was sad enough," said Harry: "David asked a thousand questions about you, and when he began to speak of Jenny his voice broke down." "Hush! don't breathe her name," exclaimed Knox in a half angry tone; "let me forget her; in this miserable world I want to have no memories."

"Well, all isn't lost yet," pursued his friend. "Cheer up and listen to a plan which I have hit upon to save David." "Alas, you were ever a sanguine youth; depend on it, he will not be pardoned. So give up all hope. Colonel Brewer, and Dav. Morgan, and General Putnam and dear knows how many others

have begged the commander-in-chief to spare him, but in vain. That unfortunate paper which was found in his pocket condemns him as a spy, and this time to-morrow he will be swinging on the gibbet." Here Aaron bowed his head and groaned.

"Pardoned? oh, I don't expect that; yet still he may be saved." "How? explain yourself; I will do anything in my power to bring back Jenny's sunny days."

"Of course you will," continued Harry, "and I am glad that you have broken your resolve not to breathe her name again. You must not be so down-hearted; believe me, she considers you the most faithful of friends; oh, do not let what has happened make you cold and unfriendly towards her."

Then after gazing cautiously about him, he continued, but in a lower voice; "you know that to-night there is no moon; well, suppose at the stillest hour, say one in the morning, when the most wakeful sentinel becomes drowsy, you and I overpower the guard; with sword, dagger and pistol we'll cheat the gallows and 'twill have to wait for some other spy. You have heard my plan; are you willing?"

Knox at first was too thunderstruck to answer; never, never before had his soul been put to such a trial; duty and affection were grappling in deadly struggle with each other. Oh, yes, what would he not do to save David's life? But, alas, there had been found in his pocket a drawing of one of the American forts, and the few lines written above the sketch were undoubtedly in the youth's hand-writing; 'twas damning evidence that, although his chief motive for crossing the lines might have been to visit Jane M'Crea, he had resolved to bring back to Boston something which might be of service to the enemies of her country, and this at a time when Washington was harassed by a thousand difficulties, and when a knowledge of his weakness might bring disaster to the cause. And as Knox thought of this, his brow grew dark, and in a firm but sad tone :

"No," he replied, "considering the circumstances of the case, I cannot lend you my aid; much as I love David Jones, I owe a duty to my country which overrides all friendships: No, I cannot help you."

When Harry heard this, his lip curled and an expression of unutterable disdain rested on his face; then drawing back a step; "My friendship," he said, "is truer than yours; by heaven! I'll make the attempt alone, and if I fail—why, Jenny will say, 'my brother threw away his life for my sake.'"

"Pray do not go!" exclaimed Knox, grasping his friend's arm. "Listen to me; you cannot succeed; do not act like a madman."

"'Tis not fear shall deter me," rejoined the youth; "I'll dare anything for David; I'll save him or hang with him on the gibbet!"

"But think of me! you are going with my knowledge to undertake something which I cannot keep hidden from the officer of the guard. Oh, Harry M'Crea, have I not already suffered agony enough!"

"Then you will betray me?" and as he spoke, his hot temper showed itself in his flashing eyes. Aaron was about to answer, when they heard footsteps, and looking round, saw Billy Smith approaching.

At once, Knox put his finger to his lips; but Harry, with a look of scorn which cut him to the quick, broke away from his grasp and hastened to meet Mrs. M'Neil's betrothed.

"Miserable, fate-stricken being that I am!" sighed Aaron, as he watched him depart: "my life is ended and yet I must live! verily, death is sometimes a man's best friend."

As the sun was still half an hour high he determined not to warn the guard immediately; he would content himself with keeping a vigilant eye on Harry M'Crea, "and perhaps," he said to himself, "I may yet be able to dissuade him from his wild scheme: alas, if I reveal it, he too must die."

Accordingly, while Jane's brother sauntered off with Smith, Aaron followed them at a distance.

"What's the trouble now?" inquired Billy, when his companion had twice turned and looked back, "you and cap. haven't fallen out, I hope?"

"It wouldn't interest you to know whether we have or not," answered Harry gruffly. "But although I will not gratify your curiosity, you and I must remain fast friends."

"Aye, that we must; I'd do anything in the world for Jane M'Crea, and you are her brother."

"I believe you," continued Harry; "and now listen and I'll tell how you may render her an invaluable service, one that will make her cheeks rosier than they ever were, and bring back all the old music to her voice."

"Oh, yes, do! give me a chance to prove my gratitude; in more ways than one she has been my truest friend; let me show her that I have not forgotten her kindness; she is plunged in misery; what can I do to give her joy?"

"Well, 'tis something which may cost you your life; but you have already risked it at Lexington and Bunker Hill; to face death once more will come easy enough."

"Face death!" gasped Billy, crushing to pieces an apple which he held in his left hand and letting the quid of tobacco drop from his mouth. But before Harry observed the sudden change which had come over him, he recovered his self-possession and in a tone of earnestness which there was no mistaking: "Yes, yes," he continued, "the worms may have me for her sake; even to death I'll serve her."

"Well spoken!" cried his companion. "Friendship with you is not an empty word: and now listen; to-night I am going to try and rescue David Jones, and I want your help. When the sentinel is nodding at his post you and I can rush on him and before the rest of the guard discover what is the matter, David Jones may be set free. What say you?"

Mr. Smith coughed twice before answering, then after rubbing the cold sweat from his brow, "I have already

told you," he said, "what I am willing to do for Jane M'Crea; I cannot do more; you may count on me sure." Then drawing a long breath and with a sudden twinkle in his eye, "but I don't see why we need put ourselves in danger in order to succeed in this matter; when it comes to wits against muscle, I bet on wits. Hunting coons has taught me the use of cogitation, for they're wise animals, and a fellow grows sharper and sharper the more time he devotes to them. I move, therefore, that we don't go butt end on to the sentry or sentries, for I guess there'll be more than one on post. The men doing guard duty belong to a New Hampshire regiment and they are tall and bony and hard to whip; but everybody has his weak 'pints' and these chaps are fond of cider. Suppose, therefore, I happen round in the vicinity of the guard-house a little after taps; of course I'll be challenged and asked my business wandering about at that hour; and then I'll hiccup and appear kind of weak in the legs and at the same time show 'em a jug, and in the jug will be a mixture which experience has taught me capsizes a man quicker than anything else, for he don't suspect what he is pouring down till it's too late; yes, rum and cider judiciously mixed will make you see the moon, even when there isn't any." Here Billy poked Harry in the ribs and grinned.

"And when I calculate that the proper moment has come I'll whistle; then you'll rush up and we'll do the business like good Christians, without a drop of bloodshed, eh?"

"I highly approve of your method," returned Harry M'Crea. "But suppose the fish won't bite? Those New Hampshire men are no fools."

"Well then—then nothing to do but to try our muscle, and if we fail, to die without grumbling."

With this understanding they separated, Billy directing his steps towards Cambridge, where he meant to procure from Mrs. M'Neil the all important jug, while Harry resolved to wait and speak to Knox who was approaching.

"I hate deception," he said, as he watched his friend; "but in a case like this, when a precious life is at stake, nothing, not even a falsehood, shall stand in the way of success. Aye, if I can make Aaron believe that I have abandoned my idea of a rescue, I'll do it."

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE shadows of evening were gathering around the camp, and the soldiers, seated in groups in front of their tents, were smoking their pipes and conversing, some about home, others about the chances of a battle, but by far the greater number were talking of the execution which was to take place on the morrow. Occasionally you might hear Knox's name mentioned, for the Lexington lads remembered how intimate he and David Jones had been, and one soldier declared that there was something very mysterious in the affair; "we all know," he said, "that Captain Knox is sweet on Jane M'Crea, but this afternoon she got leave to pay the spy a visit, and when she came out she looked like a ghost, and was hardly able to walk." At this same hour Harry and Aaron were walking back and forth under the elm trees, both too absorbed in thought to converse; the former—who had made believe that he had given up all idea of attacking the guard—was anxiously waiting for tattoo, while his companion, as he listened to the voice of the katydid, was meditating on the future.

"This time to-morrow," thought Aaron, "David will be under ground. Will Jenny survive the shock? Will she ever forget him?" and as he asked himself these questions he sighed and wished from the bottom of his heart that he had fallen on Bunker Hill.

At length, just as they reached the last tree at the entrance of the village of Cambridge, and when they were about to turn and retrace their steps, a figure

approached which they recognized at once as Mrs. M'Neil. "I'm lucky to find you so soon," exclaimed the widow; "and now, without bothering me with questions, I want you both to come as fast as possible to the house where Jenny and I lodge—not a moment to lose; come quick!"

"Is my sister ill?" inquired Harry.

"Well, it's not so much on her account that I want you—though she is taking this new misfortune dreadful hard, and I think cap. and you might perhaps comfort her a mite; but it's Mr. Smith that worries me most."

"Why, what has he been about?" inquired Knox.

"Well, since you will keep me answering questions, I'll tell you that he's gone wrong all of a sudden in the upper story," and as she spoke she tapped her forehead. "He has forced me to get him a gallon jug, and I left him mixing the horriddest mixture ever mortal tasted, and he's doing it in the only bucket Jenny and I have, and when I tried to stop him he turned on me like a catamount." When she had done speaking, Harry M'Crea folded his arms, then quietly addressing Knox:

"Go," he said, "and try and console Jenny; if you can't do it nobody can. But I'll not trouble myself with Mr. Smith; if he is mad I can't restore him to reason, so go, and I'll wait here until you return."

With this, Aaron and the widow hastened down the village street, leaving Harry gazing after them with a grim smile on his face, and at the same time trembling with excitement, for Billy Smith was getting ready to play his part in the rescue, and tattoo would soon beat.

In a few minutes Knox found himself in Jane M'Crea's room. On the table lay an open bible, which Mrs. M'Neil whispered that she had been reading to the girl; "but what with moaning and crying she disturbed me so that I gave it up; I don't know what has become of her piety."

"Oh, is that you, Aaron?" said Jane, rising from her knees, for she recognized his step at once. Then before he could answer, she had thrown her arms round

his neck. "Stay with me, don't leave me again," she sighed; "I feel calmer already, since you have crossed the threshold." This greeting very nearly unmanned poor Knox, whose heart was suffering as bitterly as her own, and he had scarcely strength enough to lead her to a chair. Nor even after he had placed himself beside her, could he at first find words to express himself.

"You have done everything for him," she continued. "Oh I know you have, and nothing can save him. But, Aaron, he will die innocent. He is no spy; he has told me so with his own lips, and David would never tell an untruth."

"How then does he account—" Here Knox was interrupted by a violent bang on the door which led into an adjoining apartment, and presently a voice called out, "beg pardon; won't stop you again; talk on."

"That's Billy Smith," remarked Mrs. M'Neil, with not a little emotion; "I turned the key on him afore I went to look for you; he's got the tremens, sure."

"How he accounts for the sketch of the Roxbury fort which was found in his pocket?" said Jane. "Oh, he declares that he knows nothing at all about it: 'tis a perfect mystery to him, and since he told me that, I have pondered deeply on the subject and I have come to the conclusion that 'tis the work of the fiend Count von Meyer. David says that the Count treated him most rudely from the very moment he landed in Boston, and that the villain has circulated the basest lies about Helen Jones; oh, yes, 'twas he put the paper in David's pocket in order to accomplish his ruin, and alas—" here she could say nothing more, and while she was sobbing, Billy Smith again struck the door with his fist and cried out, "damn him!"

"Well, is the poor boy resigned to his fate?" inquired Mrs. M'Neil, drawing her apron across her eyes.

"Resigned?" exclaimed Jane with a look of indignation, "How can he be? so young and loving; no, no, he is not resigned; and I urged him to take a step

which you may call rash, wild, any name you like, but in sober earnest I proposed it: 'In the dead of the night,' said I, 'slip off your handcuffs, break open the prison door and escape; I will be near by to meet you, and the worst that can happen is that the sentinels will bayonet us together.' But no, he was stubborn as a rock; he wouldn't give me a chance to die in his arms. On the contrary, he spoke of bright days in store for me, oh foolish boy! 'when I am gone,' he said, 'cherish my memory, but don't give way to vain grief, recover your spirits as soon as you can and then'—here she dropped her voice and gazed earnestly at Aaron—'then marry my faithful friend Knox!' aye, those were his very words. But I told him, 'when the sod covers you, David, the longest life shall not make me swerve from you again, for ever and ever I'll stay true to you.'"

During the silence which followed these words, 'twere hard to say who suffered most—Jane M'Crea or Aaron Knox. "Well, the jig isn't up yet," shouted Billy Smith, giving the door such a tremendous blow—this time with his foot—that the window panes rattled as if they were going to drop out. "I'll save him, by the Lord, I will!" Bang! Bang! Bang! and kick followed kick in rapid succession, until at length Billy was obliged to stop for want of breath. As soon as the racket ceased, Mrs M'Neil placed her hand on the girl's shoulder and whispered something in her ear. "Sleep?" said Jane in a bitter tone. "Sleep? oh, I wish I could—and never wake up!"

"Fie, child! talk like that is wicked. You know that nobody thinks more of David Jones than I do; but he has to die, and you must live, and I repeat, aloud what I have just said in a whisper, go to bed and get some sleep; you need it dreadful bad." But Jane shook her head and the widow was meditating what course to pursue, whether to use gentle means or exercise her authority, when the door which led into the passageway opened and Captain Broughton appeared. The girl at once turned towards him, and as their eyes

met, his face, which a hundred storms had battered, grew as soft as the face of a child. "It's blowing a hurricane," he said, advancing and taking her hand; "and you're laying to, with the sea sweeping over you, and your timbers are strained as they never were strained afore; but steady, my witch, steady! the hurricane may blow over, and I've come to tell you how your lover may perhaps be saved." At these words Jane said nothing, but gave him a look which showed that all hope had fled. "You remember," he continued, "how you once took me to see General Washington; but for you I'd not be commanding the Hannah and consequently there'd not be powder enough to-night to supply the pickets. Now, suppose to-morrow bright and early I take you to headquarters. I'll rig myself out in my new uniform and back you up with shots that'll go right to the mark; I'll tell the Commander-in-Chief that I want the Britisher you love so much to be pardoned, and I can't—I don't—I won't believe that he'll say no to me, Bob Broughton, of Marblehead, who saved the prisoners from the Scorpion and brought him powder enough to fight half a dozen battles."

"A thousand thanks for your sympathy and offer of help," returned Jane; "but alas, there is no hope; I would have gone to headquarters myself this afternoon had I not been told by Israel Putnam that Washington would listen to no more petitions—that his door would be closed against any one who came to trouble him further about David Jones."

"Well, I don't care what Putnam says: I've steered the Witch of the Wave through reefs which no other vessel dared go near, and by the soul of Kidd, the Pirate, I'll find a way into headquarters and tow you in behind me. Will you come?"

"I will," murmured Jane, inspired with a ray of hope by his confident tone.

"Well, at what hour is the execution?"

"Ten."

"Oh, then we have time enough; so to-morrow expect me just as sure as the sun rises."

At this moment the drums began to beat tattoo, and the sailor was about to retire when he was startled by a violent noise and a shriek from Mrs. M'Neil: Billy Smith had thrown himself against the door of the chamber where he was confined with such fury, that, badly strained already by his repeated assaults, it could stand no more, and while Broughton was staring at it, crash! crash! down it fell almost on top of the widow: then before he could recover from his astonishment, Billy rushed out with a jug under his arm and made for the other door.

"Stop him!" cried Mrs. M'Neil. "He's raving mad; stop him!" With wonderful quickness the captain of the Hannah sprang after him, and grasping his coat-tail with a grip which was no landsman's grip, brought him to a sudden halt. But Billy was really almost in a state of frenzy, and dropping the jug, which was tightly corked with a corncob, he dealt the mariner a back-handed blow between the eyes which felled him in a trice, then picking up the jug, another bound would have carried him across the threshold, when Knox, (who firmly believed that he was out of his senses) threw both arms round his neck and with all his strength pulled him back.

"We've got him now!" cried Broughton, jumping to his feet and not minding the blood which was trickling from his nose; "Hold him fast! we've got him!"

"Not by a long shot!" cried Billy, who above the din of the combat was able to hear the drums beating tattoo; and as he spoke he slipped like an eel through Aaron's arms and was on the very point of escaping, when Mrs. M'Neil adroitly thrust her leg across his path. In less time than it takes to relate, he lay sprawling on top of the jug, which flew into a dozen pieces.

"That's downright mean," he exclaimed, turning over on his back with a savage grin.

"Don't strike him!" cried Jane, approaching with

tears in her eyes and holding the candle over his body; "he is not responsible for the blow he gave you, captain; don't strike him!"

"Thanks, Miss Jenny, thanks," said Billy, calmly folding his arms and making no attempt either to defend himself or rise from the floor. "I'm suffering this rude treatment on your account: one of these days you'll find out what I mean."

"Well, for your sake I will spare him," growled the mariner, with difficulty restraining his wrath; "but he deserves a thrashing."

"Oh, yes, spare him, do," put in Mrs. M'Neil. "I am to blame for what has happened; my punches have ruined him. Alas! Jenny, we are both in misery together."

"Well now, you're not going to jilt me for this, are you?" cried Billy, his grin vanishing all at once.

Without making any response the dame withdrew into the inner room and presently returned with a pitcher of water and a clothes-line. Captain Broughton took the hint and immediately proceeded—but in the gentlest possible way—to tie Mr. Smith's arms and legs, while the good woman allowed a tiny current of water to trickle over her lover's face. "That'll quiet him better than anything else," said the mariner; "but if it doesn't, this rope will keep him from committing any further violence."

"Well, please don't pour the water down my neck," sighed the captive: "Lord! there it goes all the way down—ugh." As he spoke he writhed and gave his sweetheart such an imploring look that, although Broughton urged her to continue the treatment, she put the pitcher aside, then began wiping his face and neck with her apron, and at the same time murmured, "oh, Billy, Billy, my happy days are over."

"Well, my heart is your'n as much as it ever was," returned Mr. Smith; "and one of these days, perhaps when I'm under ground, you'll say 'there was more in him than anybody dreamt: he knew how to hold his tongue and suffer for Jane M'Crea.'"

This remark, the depth of which was, of course, not understood, caused the girl and the widow to exchange sorrowful glances, while Knox shook his head and remarked that he was very crazy yet.

"Well, you can't get rid of tremens all at once," put in Broughton, who, having securely fastened the madman's limbs, was now examining one by one the different knots in the rope: "He'll probably be a week in the hospital."

"Oh, don't take him there, let him remain where I can be near him," said Jane. "He can have a comfortable place all to himself in the lumber-room at the head of the stairway."

"Thanks!" exclaimed Billy; "and I vow to be still as a mouse all night, and to-morrow, Miss Jenny, I'll make you acknowledge that I'm a martyr."

With this, Knox and Broughton raised him off the floor, and were about to carry him to the place of confinement which the girl had indicated, when he implored them to stop and let her give him a chew of tobacco. This simple request was of course, not refused; then having thrust the quid into his mouth, she whispered a kind word and sent him off.

Mr. Smith might have been lying in his pitch-dark chamber about an hour, and Jane, Mrs. M'Neil and Knox, (who, at the girl's earnest solicitation, had consented to tarry with her until midnight), were seated near Captain Broughton, listening to a vivid description of a tempest at sea—and which he was just ending with the words, "but the blue sky came out at last, as 'twill come to you, my witch," when they were all startled by the report of a musket. Knox at once rushed to the window; but it was not until he heard another shot, followed by loud cries in the direction of the guard-house, that the truth flashed upon him.

"Alas!" he groaned, "I promised to rejoin Harry M'Crea under the elm trees, but I didn't do it; and now he has broken his word and made the rash attempt to rescue David. Alas! alas!"

"What is the matter?" inquired Jane, coming up

and resting her trembling hand on his shoulder. Without opening his lips, without breathing to her his dark suspicion, Aaron turned silently away and left the room.

And let us inform the reader that his fears were correct. No sooner had the drums beaten tattoo than Harry M'Crea concealed himself behind a pile of logs about fifty steps from the guard-house, where he anxiously waited for the signal which Billy Smith was to give.

But not having implicit faith in the success of his confederate's plan, Harry, besides an axe with which to break open the prison door, had gone around with two pistols and a dirk. And as he lay listening to the tread of the sentry, we may imagine how his heart throbbed, how he thought of his sister, whose future happiness depended on his strong arm and the weapons which he carried at his side, and when he thought of the cruel wound which he had given her betrothed at Ticonderoga, he vowed to save David or lose his own life in the attempt. Thus more than half an hour passed by; still no whistle was heard; now and then when the night fog lifted a little, the sentinel could be faintly distinguished seated on the steps of the prison house, and once Harry fancied that he heard him yawn.

At length he began to grow uneasy; he feared that Billy Smith's courage had given out, and he resolved that if his friend did not whistle soon he would make the attempt alone. Accordingly, when another half hour had gone by, he threw himself flat on the ground and crept cautiously towards the jail. Twice on the way he stopped and held his breath and listened to catch the faintest sound; but all was still and he crept on, nearer and nearer, little dreaming of the agony of mind in which poor Billy Smith was at that very moment; for Billy was not devoid of imagination, and was picturing to himself, as he lay in the lumber-room, a scene of horror and bloodshed which would haunt him all the rest of his life.

Presently, Harry rose on one knee, peered an

instant through the darkness ahead of him, then drew his pistol and rushed upon the sentinel. But sudden and unexpected as was the attack, the guard sprang to his feet and by a quick movement of his musket pushed the weapon aside just as Harry pulled the trigger, then, before the latter could make use of his dirk, a pair of strong arms clasped him, from behind, other soldiers rushed up, shouts were raised, guns fired off, and in less than five minutes Jane M'Crea's brother, securely handcuffed, was thrust into the prison with David Jones. The alarm given by the guard was quickly followed by the beating of the long roll, and the regiment flew to arms. But Aaron Knox knew that it was not an attack of the enemy, and when he joined his company his men were struck by the sad tone of his voice and wondered at it, for they knew that he was no coward ; what then troubled him so ? where were the bold and ringing tones which had cheered them on at Lexington and Bunker Hill ?

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE morning of the execution opened bright and beautiful ; not a cloud was in the sky, and the distant forest, which Jane M'Crea could see from her bedroom window, looked, in its gaudy autumn colors and with the west wind sweeping over it, like a sea of crimson and gold. But no matter how beautiful this world may be, it changes to a barren waste when the heart is sad ; and as the girl stood by the window, the blue sky—the sunshine—the happy voices of children which came to her from the village street, all seemed like bitter mockery.

Knox had not returned the evening before, as she had hoped he would, to tell her the cause of the disturbance at the guard-house. But she knew by this time all about it. "Alas !" she sighed, "he could not bear

to tell me what had happened—Harry is now a prisoner with David ; they may both be executed together.”

While she was thus oppressed by harrowing thoughts and anxiously watching for Captain Broughton to appear, she was startled by hearing Billy Smith’s voice, and turning round beheld him, to her utter amazement marching into the room arm-in-arm with Mrs. M’Neil. But her look of wonder quickly passed away and her face became as before the mirror of grief and despair.

“Jenny, dear Jenny,” spoke the widow, “I’ve something to tell which may bring a mite of sunshine to your heart, and a mite is better than nothing ; and it is that Mr. Smith, my betrothed, is not mad, as we supposed. Poor fellow ! we have most cruelly wronged him. It seems that he had agreed to meet your brother last evening, a little after tattoo, when they were both to try and rescue David ; and that is why he made such frantic efforts to break away from us.”

“True as gospel !” exclaimed Billy. “And if I had been let go free, I wager David Jones would have been safe in Boston, or at any rate out of harm’s way, long before reveille.”

Without speaking, Jane took his hand and pressed it, and as she did so, a tear rolled down Billy’s cheek : “’Tis very hard to part with David,” he said, “oh, very, very hard ; and when October comes, and Mrs. M’Neil and I join in partnership as man and wife, we’ll not feel half—no, not a quarter, so happy as if you and he were to be mated too.”

“Well, a man isn’t dead till he’s dead,” put in the widow : “I’ve wonderful faith in Captain Broughton ; he’s a hurricane in flesh and bones, and Washington won’t dare say ‘no’ when he begs for David’s life.”

“Good ! good !” cried Billy. “There’s luck in that move ; I only hope that the captain’s face isn’t out of shape this morning, for I hit him an awful lick. But any how, the General won’t notice him much when Miss Jenny is by.” At these encouraging remarks the girl’s look brightened a little, while Mrs. M’Neil, on the

contrary, began to frown. "Well, now that we are talking about poor David," said the latter, "I'd like to know why Aaron Knox didn't join this scheme to set him free. There was a chance to show friendship, if there ever was one."

"I don't know whether my brother proposed it to him or not," said Jane; "but convinced as Aaron was that David was a spy, nothing--no, nothing could have swerved him from the path of strict duty."

"Well, thank the Lord, my future husband isn't troubled with scruples: the best fellows after all are those that like strong punch," and as the dame spoke she slapped Billy on the shoulder and gave him a most loving squint, at which he whispered that his mouth was like a Cape Cod sand hill. The hint sufficed; off the widow carried him into the other room, where in a few minutes there was a suspicious clinking of tumblers and a sound as if a lemon had dropped on the floor.

They were still at their potation when a light, active step was heard coming up the staircase. In another moment it had reached the passage-way and a voice called out, "not seven bells yet, my witch; time enough." Then as soon as Broughton got to Jane's side he began to explain how it happened that he had not arrived earlier: "The truth is," he said, "I didn't fall asleep till nigh dawn. Can't tell what kept me awake so long last night. The boom of the Hannah creaked a good deal, but I'm used to that—at least I ought to be—and I don't think it should have kept me awake; then once I fancied that the schooner was drifting out to sea, but of course that was imagination, for she was well-anchored and there was scarce wind enough to blow a feather. But somehow I could not sleep for ever so long, and when I did it was nigh morning, and that's how I'm a little late."

"Well, I didn't close my eyes at all," said Jane, as she put on her hood; "but I'm quite ready to go with you, and may our Father in heaven give us success."

Just as they were about to depart, Mrs. M'Neil and

her betrothed re-appeared, locked arm-in-arm, and of course the sailor had to tarry a moment, if only to recover from his astonishment at the sight. The dame smiled as she saw the big eyes he was making, then went on to tell the secret of Billy's extraordinary conduct the evening before, and when she got through, Broughton took Mr. Smith's hand and shook it hard, and vowed that if he would join the crew of the *Hannah*, he would make him boatswain at once. To which Billy responded that he preferred to serve his country on land, where there was likely to be plenty of hard fighting, rather than run the risk of being drowned for any amount of prize money.

Such a blunt remark drew a growl from the mariner, which Jane happily cut short by pulling him out of the room.

When they reached the street they saw a crowd of country people coming towards them, all drawn to Cambridge by a morbid desire to witness the death struggles of the spy; and foremost in the crowd, Jane recognized Mr. and Mrs. Leech. The latter immediately caught the girl by the sleeve and inquired how David Jones bore his sentence.

"Is he resigned?" she said, "does he take it hard?"

"I hope he has made his peace with the Lord?" put in Mr. Leech, whose face was three inches longer than usual. "When he lived in Lexington he seemed to me rather thoughtless and giddy, and I'm afraid he wasn't much given to praying. How is he now, Miss M'Crea?"

To these questions Jane gave not the least notice, nor did she even open her lips to any of her acquaintances, of whom she recognized not a few in the throng, but walked on in perfect silence, holding fast to Broughton's arm and thinking only of the solemn errand on which she had set out.

When they arrived at headquarters they found the porch crowded with officers, who respectfully touched their hats, and tears moistened the eyes of not a few,

for Israel Putnam had already whispered who Jane was. "And now," said Broughton, when they got to the door of the room occupied by the Commander-in-Chief as a private office, "now steady your helm! Let me do the heavy fighting and, by Kidd's soul, I'll blaze away till I win."

But Jane, who by nature was bold and outspoken, felt herself at this trying moment possessed of a strange, almost fierce energy, and catching his own peculiar phraseology, "no," she exclaimed, "let me sail first: follow me."

With this, she opened the door and passed in. Washington was seated at his table writing, but looked up at once with that dignified, fatherly air which had so drawn her heart to him the first time she had come here, and advancing confidently to his side she was about to tell her errand, when her eyes rested on a sheet of paper which was spread out before him; and as she saw it her blood ran cold and a feeling of faintness came over her—it was the fatal evidence which had convicted her betrothed and the lines written above the sketch of the Roxbury fort were certainly in David's handwriting! "But, no, no, I will not believe it; he would not tell an untruth," she murmured. Before she recovered from the shock which the sight of the paper had produced, Washington motioned Captain Broughton to leave the room, then without waiting for her to begin, "Miss M'Crea," he said, "what may I do for you?" With bloodless cheek and scarcely a ray of hope in her heart, she gazed frankly at him: "something" she replied, "which nobody but yourself can do. A youth whom I believed to be dead is alive; I love him with all my heart and soul; I am his betrothed; to-day he is to be executed as a Spy. Oh, spare him! for God's sake, give him his life! don't, don't take him from me!"

Washington, although profoundly moved by this fervent appeal, did not open his lips, but rested his finger on the drawing of the fort.

"Oh, that is not his work!" cried Jane, "no, no he

never drew it, nor did he write a single one of those lines; oh, spare him! let him live!" Then turning half round and listening a moment. "Hark! the drums are beating; oh, God! David's last hour has come!"

Yes, the assembly was calling the troops together to witness the execution, and as the harrowing sound reached her ears, she fell on her knees and gazed up in Washington's face with an expression which smote him deeper than her words, and turning his eyes away he fixed them on a map which hung by the door, and there his iron will kept them riveted for almost a minute, but then, in spite of himself, back they came to the girl's agonized countenance, and as he looked at her his breast heaved, his lip quivered. Quickly Jane sprang up, and with a voice thrilling with joyous emotion cried, "oh, I see mercy coming! Thank God! Thank God!"

"Yes," murmured Washington, while a tear ran down his cheek, "your brother and lover are both pardoned." In another instant she had clasped him round the neck and was showering on him kiss after kiss, when there arose a tremendous noise in the hall; huzza followed huzza in quick succession, and freeing himself from her embrace, he hastened to find out the cause of such an uproar. When he opened the door he discovered the captain of the Hannah swinging his cap round and round, as if he were mad, while Israel Putnam and a number of other officers were trying to make him hold his tongue. "No, by Kidd's soul, I'll not be still," cried Broughton. "I know he has pardoned him; my sharp ears heard it; huzza! huzza!"

But no sooner did the mariner espy Washington, than he ceased his shouts, and springing towards him, "Great man," he said, "you are good as you are great. Some call you stern and cold; but they are fools, they don't know you. For the mercy you have shown to-day Bob Broughton of Marblehead will be ever grateful. I consider it a favor done to myself; the Hannah will sail all the faster for it; she'll fight ten times harder, and from Florida Reefs to Newfoundland I promise you

that the Stars and Stripes will bring terror to the ships of King George.

Washington looked gravely at him a moment without speaking, then beckoning to General Putnam whispered something in his ear. The latter immediately left the house and mounting his horse galloped off at full speed towards the camp. But the clatter of his steed had hardly died away and the Commander-in-Chief had only just re-entered his office to tell Jane M'Crea that he had sent orders to stay the execution, when a young woman frailer than David's betrothed and of a more delicate beauty was seen approaching the porch. None of the officers knew her, but they were struck by her bewitching countenance, and while they were wondering who she could be and why she looked so distressed she stopped, and with trembling voice asked to see General Washington. "Oh, if it is possible, let me see him at once; there is no time to lose," she said. Such an appeal could not be refused, and with a courteous bow General Lee ushered her into the presence of his chief. We need not say that Jane M'Crea was astonished at the apparition of Helen Jones; but before she could utter a word, the latter, who seemed not to notice her, rushed up to the General and clasping her hands, "oh, I am the guilty one," she cried, "I am the spy; punish me, but spare my brother!"

"Well, he is pardoned," exclaimed Jane, before Washington had a chance to speak, and hastening to embrace her friend; "yes, this good man has given David his life." "Pardoned? Pardoned?" Helen could say nothing more; the joyful news had overcome her power to speak, and bowing her head on Jane's breast she let the tears flow.

For the next few minutes there was silence in the room; Washington's countenance betrayed his deep emotion, and Jane mingled her tears with Helen's; at the same time the bright sunshine in her heart reflected itself on her face, the drums had already ceased to beat the assembly; all, all was happiness now and the sweet-

est smile that had ever been seen was the smile of Jane M'Crea at this moment.

At length, when they had all grown somewhat calmer, Washington requested Helen Jones to tell him who she was. Accordingly in simple language, she related her story: how she had left her home in Canada to seek for a lost brother; how she had found her way to Boston how she had there fallen in with a Hessian officer, at whose instigation she had once crossed the lines for the purpose of carrying a message to Jane M'Crea, for whom he had conceived a base passion; "and 'twas while I was on my way back to Boston," she said, "that I took a sketch of the Roxbury fort, which like a fool I gave to Count von Meyer. Before long he discovered that my brother was betrothed to Jane M'Crea, and from that hour began to plot his ruin. So when the proper time came and David was about to cross the lines to visit her, the artful villain contrived to slip the drawing into his pocket, hoping that he would be captured and treated as a spy. This morning an Indian woman, whom I have in my service, learned from the officer of the picket-guard that a British soldier was going to be hung to-day; I did not doubt that it was my brother. But I need say nothing more; your generous heart has pardoned him."

Then after a brief pause and turning to her friend, "but now tell me," she continued, "have you any news of poor Harry?"

"Oh, yes, he is pardoned too!" replied Jane. Then while Helen gazed at her in astonishment, she went on to explain how the youth had been rescued from the prison ship; how he had attacked the sentry at the guard-house in the vain hope of setting David free, for which offence he was likewise to have been executed, and ended by informing Washington that Harry was betrothed to Helen Jones.

"Well, I mean to remain henceforth on the American side," spoke Helen, "and I promise you, General, that Harry M'Crea will be none the worse soldier for having a British girl for his sweetheart."

"Truly love worketh wonders," said Washington, with a twinkle in his eye. "Does not Miss M'Crea wish to counterbalance this addition to our force, by returning with her lover to King George's army?"

"Such is indeed my firm resolve, provided you give me a pass," replied Jane.

"Then you would rather not wait till the war is over?"

"No, your excellency."

"But, dear friend," said Helen, "I must inform you that just before my brother set out to visit you he received orders to—" here she suddenly stopped and bit her lip.

"Oh, you need not fear to speak out," said Washington, smiling. "I am kept tolerably well acquainted with all your plans, and know that you are about to send troops to oppose General Schuyler in his march upon Canada, and doubtless your brother has been ordered to join them."

Helen was still confused and biting her lips when somebody knocked on the door, and presently Bob Broughton thrust his head into the room and beckoned the girls to come out. "Yes, go," said Washington, "go and enjoy yourselves : it is lovely weather and you must make the most of it." Accordingly, they each shook his hand and went off, feeling a gratitude towards him which no language can express. In the hall they found the captain of the Hannah waiting for them, and as soon as they appeared he gave a huzza, then slipping in between them, bade them lock arms and join in the chorus of a song which he was going to sing.

"And now we'll begin," he said, as soon as they had got a short distance from the house :

"Oh nothing like two consorts
To sail along life's sea ;
One upon the windward bow
And t'other on the lee.

When I'm tired of Molly's cheek
I tack and kiss Sophia ;
And with the double hug I feel
My heart go bounding higher.

Sail, sail, sail, my lads,
With all the gals you can,
The Jack who likes to sail alone,
He isn't half a man."

"But what ails you? why don't you sing?" he exclaimed, just a little provoked, for neither of them had opened their lips. "This is one of our best hymns; why don't you sing?"

"Well, it is so different from anything I ever heard in our meeting-house at Lexington," answered Jane, blushing.

"No doubt it is," pursued Broughton. "But it's a healthy hymn for all that, and the very thing to sing when a fellow is a thousand miles from land and no gals nearer to him than the mermaids who keep fathoms deep under his keel; ha, ha, ha!"

At this, his companions burst into a hearty laugh, which was presently answered by a cheer from a crowd of people who were seen approaching from the direction of Cambridge. They were evidently much excited—and perhaps a few disappointed—for the news of the pardon had already spread far and wide. Foremost among them was Mrs. M'Neil arm in arm with Mrs. Leech, which greatly surprised Jane M'Crea, who knew that they had not been on speaking terms for several years, having quarrelled about a clothes-line; while immediately behind them came Billy Smith. The latter did not stop, like the rest, to congratulate Jane, but kept straight on with a most droll expression, and when she called out and asked where he was going, he answered, to Lexington, to tell the parson." Then when she laughed and said that he must be blind, for the Reverend Mr. Clark was already by her side, he replied with a giggle. "Lord! I don't mean him, I mean the 'coon." This eccentric speech provoked a loud laugh, and let us add that none enjoyed it more than the preacher himself: then before it died away a stentorian voice began:

"Oh, nothing like two consorts
To sail along life's sea."

Nor could Helen Jones and her friend, by pinches and imploring looks, make Broughton stop until he had got to the very end of the song, nor prevent him then from giving them each a hearty kiss; and he was about to repeat the hug when Israel Putnam in full uniform, but without his hat, which had blown off while he was galloping to the camp with the news of the pardon, elbowed his way into the throng, accompanied by David Jones and Harry M'Crea. "And now," he cried, after giving the happy lovers time to embrace—and we may imagine how fondly David pressed Jane to his heart—"now I'm going to keep tavern once more: all ye that like dancing and fun, come along with me." A scene of great uproar and merriment followed this extraordinary speech; the Rev. Mr. Clark rolled up his eyes, Mrs. M'Neil pierced Billy through with a squint which made him shiver all over; but nobody refused the invitation, so with Jane M'Crea holding fast to David's hand, and Harry holding fast to Helen's, off they went to the "Wee-drop," the best public house in Cambridge.

The good man who kept it was surprised as well as delighted to find his tavern suddenly full of thirsty people, for his business had fallen off not a little since the army had been put under stricter discipline, and his red face was wreathed in the jolliest of smiles as he handed round the mugs. Then when everybody was ready, Putnam stamped his foot and said, "now for a toast!" and amidst a silence in which you might have heard a pin drop, he was about to propose the health of the *Pride of Lexington*, when Jane M'Crea, lifting high her glass, cried out, "George Washington—God bless him!"

We need not say that this was drunk with wild applause, and while the girl and David pressed their lips to the same cup, there was not a heart in the room that did not throb with delight at the sight of the happy pair.

What followed after this we do not know, for as soon as they had done drinking the health of the Com-

mander-in-chief, Mrs. M'Neil whispered to her particular friends to accompany her to her lodging: "there we shall be more private," she said, "and I'll brew you some punch that'll make your hair curl." Accordingly, her particular friends, six in number, glided from the Ordinary unchallenged by Israel Putnam, who was busy knocking the spigot out of a rum cask—and this was lucky for had he espied them he certainly would not have let them depart—then with the widow leading the way, they hastened down the street with many curious eyes staring at them, for Broughton, who could not restrain his spirits, was singing with all his might, and Billy Smith gave the chorus:

"Sail, sail, sail my lads
With all the gals you can,
The Jack who likes to sail alone.
He isn't half a man."

The first thing the widow did when she had ushered her friends into her chamber, was to lock the door, then having bade them make themselves at home, she snatched David away from Jane M'Crea, and before he could recover from his astonishment, was whirling him round and round like mad, laughing and calling out to Billy Smith to catch hold of Jenny and put her through a jig too.

And Billy would have done it, had not the young woman, who was gazing out of the window, pushed him from her with a troubled look, which he thought very strange indeed on such a happy occasion. But we cannot wonder at the shadow which was upon her face: only for a moment did her eyes meet Aaron's eyes, but during that brief space, his own deep, never-to-be-forgotten sadness mirrored itself in her soul, and chilled the hope and joy that were there.

"Oh, faithful Aaron," she sighed, when presently he turned and walked away; "I wish I had not seen you: forget me! forget me!"

"Come, come, what's the matter with the witch?" exclaimed Broughton, stepping up and taking her

hand ; " the trade-wind is blowing to-day ; come, spread all sail and be merry." Then drawing her gently into the middle of the room he made her stand beside Helen Jones : " Ha ! " he continued, " was ever a pair more unlike ? Yet both of 'em are rare birds. The witch has more beam, and her nose is worth all the straight noses that ever were made, while her hair, if 'twas braided, would do for a cable ; but the black-eyed one isn't far behind her in loveliness, and her short, curly locks will play the deuce with many a heart. Ha ! ha ! ha ! now don't frown, my beauties," then before they could prevent him he gave them another hug, which made Mrs. M'Neil, who had just finished the jig, glance at Billy Smith and wish that it was sweet October.

" Oh, the happy day is coming ! " exclaimed Billy, who understood the language of her eyes full as well as that of her tongue : " Get the wedding gown ready."

" And a happy day for us too," said David, slipping his arm round Jane's waist.

" Yes, yes ; oh, how slow time flies ! " cried the girl, forgetting at once at the sound of his voice all about Aaron Knox.

" That's right, my witch ! " said Broughton, " keep the bright look on your face that is on it now ; don't let it go away : the trade-wind is blowing, spread all sail while it blows."

" True, true," said David, " never be sad, always cheerful ; and why isn't my friend Knox here to smile and rejoice with us ? 'Tis strange that he should not show himself."

" Very strange ! " exclaimed Broughton.

" Very strange ! " repeated Billy Smith.

" Well, wherever Aaron is, you may be certain he is wishing all happiness to you and me," said Jane, looking earnestly at her betrothed.

" I believe you," returned David ; " and wherever we wander, whatever may happen to us, we will always have a place in our hearts for Aaron."

"Yes, yes," said Jane, "all my love for you, all my friendship for him."

Here they were interrupted by Mrs. M'Neil, who pulled Jane away and bade her come help make the punch. "Aye, make haste," cried Billy Smith; "it's a shame to keep me waiting so long."

In about five minutes the dame reappeared, her face flushed and with a tell-tale sparkle in her eye which showed that she had been tasting of the beverage and found it good. And now for half an hour the friends continued to enjoy themselves, laughing, singing, and quite forgetting all past troubles. Oh, happy fleeting moments! Come in, sweet sunbeams, and throw upon the scene all the brightness you can: David is cooing to Jenny, Harry and Helen are likewise playing turtle-dove together, while Billy Smith is imploring his swan to advance the wedding-day a fortnight.

It was not until the time for the party to break up had almost arrived, that David spoke to Jane about Mr. Woodbury. "When Harry visited me yesterday in the guard-house," he said, "I learnt that the Ancient was dead. What a consolation it must be to know that you smoothed his last years! 'twas you saved him from the poor-house."

"Yes," returned Jane, "I am better rewarded for my trouble by the memory of the happiness I gave him than if he had left me a fortune."

It was a pity the youth did not continue to talk about Josiah Woodbury, for it was always a pleasing theme with Jane M'Crea; but presently he began to tell her of Count von Meyer and the treatment which he and Helen had received at his hands, "and from certain things she has told me," he added, "I fear that you also are the object of his diabolical hate." "I am the cause of it all," said Jane, the color fading from her cheek. "But is there no probability of his going back to Europe? Is he still high in favor with General Gage?"

"I am sorry to say that he enjoys the esteem of

our Commander-in-chief, for he is of noble birth, possesses great influence in his own country, and has promised that next spring a large army of Hessians will come over here to fight against you. Still if he remained with the army there would be little to fear from him; but he has been commissioned to go among the Indian tribes along the Canada border, and rouse them against the Americans, and under his leadership many cruel deeds will no doubt be committed."

"The villain has already left Boston for that purpose," said Helen Jones, who had been listening to this part of their conversation. "He sailed down the coast within an hour of the time I heard that you had been arrested as a spy."

"If it is that 'ere Hessian devil you're talking about," put in Billy Smith, drawing his chair closer, "I just want you all to understand that he'll not give anybody much more trouble; I'm going to make short work of him; exactly what way doesn't matter. I have a way of my own of doing business."

"Well, all this is news to me," said Broughton, with a terrible frown. "I wish I had heard of it afore. I've a good mind to give up the Hannah for the next cruise, and put myself on the track of this wretch. Though I don't often talk about such things, I want you to know that Bob Broughton of Marblehead is no child at man-killing; if Kidd the pirate could come to life, he'd tell you so."

Here they were interrupted by a loud knock on the door, and in another moment an officer appeared, bringing an order from headquarters to take David Jones back to Boston under a flag of truce. It was not unexpected, yet it seemed to Jane M'Crea sudden and startling, so completely had she forgotten in the past half hour that her betrothed might ever again be separated from her. "Oh, I will go with you!" she said, clinging to his arm, "not again will I lose sight of your face." "Well, dear Jenny," whispered the youth, striving to hide his emotion, "be reasonable; I might have told you sooner, but I was loth to do it, that

I am not likely to be many days longer in Boston. The regiment to which I am attached is under orders to march; and you could not accompany me, for 'tis on a distant expedition, and where if anything happened to us, you would be in very great danger. Now I beg you, do not take it so hard. 'Tis painful enough for us to have to say good-bye. Oh, let not your tears add to my grief."

"Aye, cheer up!" said Mrs. M'Neil, bending over the girl; "I'll work it so that you'll not be kept a great while away from him; trust me, October shan't pass without your wedding." Without opening her lips, Jane let go his arm, then clasped his neck, as if determined that he should not escape. David was in despair; the officer was waiting impatiently on the threshold; what must he do? Loosen the hands which held him so tightly? Do violence to the loving heart which was throbbing only for him?

Suddenly, while he was bewildered, almost unmanned by the trial to which he was subjected, Jane's arms dropped from his neck and looking at him with an expression from which all grief had vanished, and speaking in a voice which had in it a thrill of inspiration: "Go, David," she said; "Have faith in immortality; we will meet again." Then without another word, she let him give her a last embrace; not a sigh escaped her as he pressed her to his heart; she made no response when he said "farewell." But her eye followed him until he disappeared, and on her face was a radiant look, which filled Mrs. M'Neil and the others who observed it with wonder and awe: it was as if the veil which hid the future had been drawn aside and she beheld a vision of happiness in the world to come.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

OUR story opened with the spring of the first year of the Revolution, and now with the autumn it draws to a close. We have seen the fight at Lexing-

ton, the capture of Ticonderoga, the struggle on Bunker Hill, and the arrival of Washington at Cambridge to take command of the undisciplined volunteers and form them into the Continental army.

And now let us leave him watching the enemy in Boston with a sleepless eye, bearing with patience the clamors raised against him for his inactivity, and so calmly, so hopefully, supporting the burden which has been placed on his shoulders, that we might almost believe he is gifted with prophetic vision and that through the long weary years which separated him from the triumph at Yorktown, he already beholds America an independent nation.

It is just a week since the pardon of David Jones and Harry M'Crea, and Colonel Brewer's regiment as well as Morgan's riflemen are in a state of unusual excitement, for they have received marching orders.

When Aaron Knox heard the news, his haggard face lit up with a wild joy and his eyes flashed again with their old fire. "Who knows," said he to himself, "but a merciful Providence may now set me free from my misery? In battle I may find the rest which I long for."

Not once had he laid eyes on Jane M'Crea since the morning when he beheld her gazing out of the window of Mrs. M'Neil's room—the morning when the sadness stamped on his countenance had left such a deep impression upon the girl. And now that he was going away he was determined not to bid her good-bye: "I cannot trust myself," he said, "to shake her hand, nor even look in her face. I am not what I used to be; since all hope has vanished my love is more intense, more passionate than ever. No, no, we must not meet."

Such were his thoughts as he folded up his blanket and gathered together the many little odds and ends strewn about the tent. Almost every object on which his eye fell, brought Jane M'Crea to his mind. Here lay a letter which she had written to him a few weeks before; there a handkerchief on which she had embroi-

dered his name ; yonder pair of stockings had been mended by her needle, while the black cockade and eagle feather which he wore on his cap had been put there by the same dear hand.

"I am going into the wilderness," he said bitterly, "and these ghosts will go with me. Yet if I destroyed them—turned them into ashes—one ghost would still remain; the Ancient was right; a memory never dies."

At this moment Billy Smith entered the tent, looking pale and worried. "Good morning, cap.," he said; "can I help you pack up?" Knox shook his head. "Well, then, I'll talk to you a little about Miss Jenny; 'tis on her account I have come to see you. You must know that she is almost beside herself since she has heard that the regiment is ordered away. 'If Aaron goes, I will go too,' she keeps repeating; 'he is my guardian and he must take me to David at all hazards.' But of course that is impossible; how could she accompany us hundreds of miles through the wilderness? We may not stop until we get to the St. Lawrence, nor even then, and I told her so. But, would you believe it, Mrs. M'Neil favors the idea, and declares that the girl shall set out with us, and be delivered over to David Jones as soon as possible. She seems to have no doubt that he is with the British force which has been sent to the northern part of New York. As for the Indians who are roaming over the region with the devilish Count von Meyer at their head, she doesn't fear them a bit:—'what if the Hessian should discover that the girl is in that part of the country? He can do her no harm when we are all on the watch, and I promise you that before the first snow falls she'll be David's bride; yes, he can come to Fort Edward under a flag of truce, and the knot can be tied there as well as anywhere else.' Now that is the way Mrs. M'Neil talks, and so no wonder Miss Jenny is determined to go."

While Billy was thus expressing himself in a tone more animated than usual, Knox remained with folded arms, gazing on a small prayer-book which Jane had given him the morning when his regiment took its

departure from Lexington. She had often read aloud certain passages in it, and now it seemed as if he again heard her voice; and as those happy moments came back to him, those sweet moments when he was first falling in love, he experienced a peace and calmness of soul which was most remarkable, for it had come all of a sudden. "Little things produce mighty changes," he said to himself when his friend had done speaking, "Yes, she shall accompany us, and with my own hands I will deliver her to David; nor will I mourn and pass my days and nights in wretchedness, cursing my fate. No, no, 'tis wicked to do so, and this little book"—here he picked the volume up, and pressed it to his lips—"shall be a link between us which nothing can break."

"Then you agree with Mrs. M'Neil, and are going to let Miss Jenny come?" said Billy Smith, who had caught a few of the words which his captain was whispering.

"Yes, I will at once tell her to get ready," replied Knox, putting on his cap. In another moment he was walking rapidly towards Cambridge, followed by his friend, who, to judge by the expression of his face, was not at all pleased with his decision.

"This wild and foolish notion of Miss Jenny's ought to have been nipped in the bud," said Smith. "After waiting so long for David, why couldn't she wait a little longer? In times like these, when things are topsy-turvy, and the Indians paid so much for every American scalp, 'tis madness for a girl to risk herself in the wilderness. How the devilish Hessian would grin if he knew she was coming."

Jane M'Crea met Knox on the threshold of her room, and before he opened his lips, "Good and faithful friend," she said, "I know what you have come to tell me; I knew it before I saw you; you must do your duty as guardian to the end," and her eyes shone with a singular brightness, and in the tone of her voice was something which struck him as very peculiar.

"Yes, you and David shall be no longer separated," exclaimed Knox.

"That's right," put in Mrs. M'Neil, "I'll manage to let him know she is with us, and then no doubt he can come and get her; if not, we can take her to the British camp."

"Here they were startled by a loud voice crying—"Ship ahoy! ship ahoy!" and in another moment Captain Broughton bounced into the room.

"I couldn't put to sea," he exclaimed, "without a parting look at the witch, and here I am."

"Well, she's going away too," spoke Mrs. M'Neil; "yes, we're all on the wing."

"No?"

"Oh, but we are." In a few words the widow now explained how she and Jane were going to accompany the troops which had been ordered to the north, and that the girl was to join her betrothed, whose regiment formed part of a British force which had been sent to the Province of New York, at the earliest opportunity.

When she had finished speaking the mariner looked at Jane a moment in silence, then in a warning tone: "Take care, take care," he said, "there may be tough weather ahead. But if you will go, you will, and there's an end of it."

"The Lord watches over me. His will be done," said Jane.

"And here's another couple that wants to get mated on the war-path," exclaimed Mrs. M'Neil, as Harry and Helen appeared. Then catching the latter by the wrist; "What, bracelets? Beautiful gold bracelets? Better leave such things behind; why tempt the Indians more than necessary? aren't you satisfied with risking your pretty scalp?"

"For goodness' sake, don't talk in that horrid way?" said Mr. Smith, with an ill-concealed shudder. "If you want the girls to come along and have a pleasant time you mustn't scare 'em."

"Scare 'em? Ha! ha!" then running her hand over the top of Billy's head—on which was about an inch and a half of hair—"not much chance of the redskins getting hold of your scalp, eh?"

"Don't be too sure," exclaimed Broughton, with a sly wink; "but as Miss M'Crea says, the Great Spirit watches over us all, and His will be done." Then snapping his fingers while Billy's knees were knocking one against the other, "Come," he added, "let's have a drink, a parting drink." In a moment the bottle of rum was produced, then when everybody was helped, the mariner raised his glass and said, "May we meet again!"

"May we meet again!" echoed the voices, and as Knox spoke the words, he recalled the day when Ethan Allen had come to Buckman's tavern and drank to victory at Ticonderoga! How long ago it seemed! What events had happened since that May evening.

"And now!" continued Broughton, taking Jane's hand in his, "now we must part. But afore I slip my cable I want to beg a favor of you and it is—that you'll not be rash; don't expose yourself as you did the first time we met; there are plenty of men to do the fighting, and by-and-by, when these squally times are over, Bob Broughton of Marblehead will find you out wherever you may be, and we'll drink the toast, "Here we are again!" A tear glistened in his eye as he spoke, while Jane, to hide her own feelings, turned and looked out of the window, then playfully remarked that there was hardly enough wind for the Hannah to sail, and that he might pay her another visit before the regiment marched away.

"Ha!" he continued, "you may teach me a great deal about bees and flowers, but I can teach you something about the sea and the wind." With this he pointed to a mass of fleecy, cone-shaped clouds, which were flying much higher than clouds generally fly: "That's a never failing sign of a stiff breeze," he said. "Remember—

"A mackerel sky and a mare's tail
Make lofty ships carry low sail."

"Then you are really going?" said Jane, now looking him full in the face. "I am; the Hannah is wait-

ing for me outside the bar, stripped for a race or a fight; I must be off, farewell!" Here he dropped her hand, and without speaking a word to his other friends, hastened out of the room.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

TEN days passed after marching orders had been given, before the Second Massachusetts regiment and Morgan's riflemen took their departure from Cambridge. The delay, which was caused by a threatened attack of the enemy, was particularly irksome to Billy Smith, who longed to find himself in the wilderness; for bad as the Indians might be, he could not believe that they were half so formidable as the grenadiers whom he had seen on Bunker Hill.

But on the morning of the first of October, tents were struck and the troops set out for Fort Ticonderoga, where General Schuyler was assembling an army with which to invade Canada.

This officer had already been joined by three thousand men from New York and New England, besides five hundred Green Mountain boys, and he was only waiting for the reinforcement which Washington had promised him, in order to advance to the Saint Lawrence. General Montgomery, Ethan Allen and Seth Warner were to take part in the invasion, from which the best results were expected; for not only would the pressure of armed support confirm the Canadian Patriots in their opposition to Great Britain, but the capture of Quebec would paralyze the efforts of General Carleton, who was using every means to induce the Canadians to take up arms against the Rebels. He had already distributed fifteen thousand muskets among the French settlers, while Count Otto von Meyer was busy inciting the Indian tribes along the border to form an alliance with the king.

The season was perfect for active service, and as Colonel Brewer's regiment and the Virginia volunteers

marched away from camp, laughing and singing and with a band of music at their head playing Yankee Doodle, you might have taken them for a jolly picnic party rather than soldiers about to engage in serious warfare.

In a wagon drawn by a pair of thin, wiry ponies sat Mrs. M'Neil, Helen Jones, Jane M'Crea and Nanny the Indian woman, who had obtained leave from Lord Howe to join her mistress. At the bottom of the vehicle were three jugs of cider, a couple of bags of bread, an immense cheese and half a bushel of chestnuts which Billy Smith had gathered the day before ; and at no small risk, for the farmer on whose land the chestnut trees stood had attacked him with a bull-dog, and our friend had escaped with difficulty and not without the loss of his coat tail.

Among all these light hearted warriors not one was happier this morning than Harry M'Crea, and as he marched along he could not but compare his feelings with those which had possessed him the day when he departed from Lexington with Ethan Allen. Then his heart had been black with revenge against David Jones, now he and David were warm friends, while Helen Jones was the being whom he loved dearest on earth.

"I could not have believed a short month ago that I should ever be so happy as I am to-day," he said to himself, as his eyes rested on his destined bride. And Helen, too, was very happy. As for Mrs. M'Neil, we need not say that she was honored by frequent visits from Mr. Smith, who made all kinds of excuses to fall out of the ranks in order to squeeze her hand ; and during one of these brief interviews he sighed, "Lord ! Lord ! what is life ? Will this expedition end with a wooden leg ?" Then he dropped his voice and muttered, "damned scrape ; wish I was a coon," and turned so red in the face and ground his teeth so hard that the good woman thought he was getting a fit.

But Aaron Knox rarely approached the wagon, and his comrades wondered at his silence. Yet if his ex-

pression was marked with sadness, it was a soft and subdued melancholy, and very different from the look of despair which had so touched Jane M'Crea's heart the day when she saw him watching her, as she stood by the window in Mrs. M'Neil's room just after the pardon of David Jones and her brother. Nor was Jane herself more inclined to cheerfulness; she hardly spoke a word. But on her cheeks was a deep flush, and her eyes shone with a brightness which Mrs. M'Neil, who watched her closely, had never observed before.

And so passed the first day of their journey to the wilderness, and the days which followed were very like the first, except that the soldiers kept their ranks better closed, and advanced more cautiously than the morning when they marched from Cambridge.

Towards sunset of the fifth day, Billy Smith declared that he espied an Indian on a knoll close by; but when he wanted to point him out to Knox, the figure had disappeared. Nevertheless, they believed his word and the incident caused not a little excitement. The same evening, while they were seated around their bivouac fires, talking of the country which they were going to invade, and wondering what kind of a city Quebec might be, they were startled by the arrival of a squad of horsemen under the command of Ben Briggs, General Schuyler's most trusty scout, who urged them at once to extinguish their fires: "The Iroquois are prowling all around you," he said, "and to-night every man must sleep with one eye open." He then went on to inform them that the savages were under the lead of a cunning white man, and that already many bloody deeds had been committed.

"Besides the Iroquois," he added, "there are about three hundred British light horsemen reconnoitring the country; so you see General Schuyler's movements are closely watched, and our advance upon Canada is anything but a surprise."

Following his timely caution, the fires were put out and the sentries doubled; and let us add that although not regularly called upon to stand guard, Billy Smith

was as vigilant as the most vigilant among them. Not once during the night did he close his eyes, and every time a panther howled, he would clutch his rifle, and through his excited brain scenes of horror and bloodshed flitted.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

ON the following day, towards the hour of noon, the troops reached Fort Edward, where they were met by a messenger from General Schuyler with orders for them to proceed to Skeenesboro' and thence in boats down Lake Champlain to Ticonderoga.

This was welcome news to men wearied by a long march, and Billy Smith lost not a moment in finding Mrs. M'Neil, whom he persuaded to embark in the same batteau with himself: "and like enough," he added, "there's a chaplain at t'other fort, who'll turn us for a Spanish dollar, into man and wife."

These words were spoken in a small room of a two-story log house, which stood within the stockade of Fort Edward. In the apartment, besides the widow, he found Harry M'Crea and his sister, Helen Jones and the Indian woman, all chatting pleasantly together except Jane, who had taken a seat by the window, and was gazing towards the forest which was about a quarter of a mile distant; and so steadily did she continue to gaze in that direction that Mrs. M'Neil, after having consented to Billy's proposition, approached the girl and asked what she was looking at.

"A figure which disappeared almost the very moment I laid eyes upon it," replied Jane; "'twas a horseman in scarlet uniform, and I know that horseman was David."

"David!" exclaimed the widow; then after a pause, "well sure enough he may be with the troopers Ben Briggs spoke about last evening."

"And to satisfy myself," pursued Jane, rising from the chair, "I'll go ask a scout whom I saw arrive a

little while ago, if he knows anything about the British reconnoitring party."

As soon as she was out of the room, Helen and Harry asked the dame what was the matter; "I begin to think," said the youth, "that sister did a foolish thing to leave Cambridge. You and my betrothed can remain here or at Ticonderoga, but Jenny will not rest quiet until she joins David. Yet how is that possible under present circumstances? who knows where he is? why did she leave us just now so abruptly?"

"Alas, I begin to regret, too, that she is here; I don't know what could have possessed me to let her come; she is so rash, and as different from what she used to be as black and white; and now—" here Mrs. M'Neil was interrupted by the entrance of Knox, whose countenance was very much excited.

"Where is Jenny?" he inquired glancing hurriedly around the room; "I want to see her; where is she?"

Before anybody could answer, the one whom he was seeking approached him from behind, and resting her hand upon his arm, "faithful friend, I know it all," she whispered.

"Then the scout has told you?" exclaimed Aaron, frowning.

"Of course; why not? And is it not remarkable—does it not seem the work of an overruling Providence, that this very scout, whom I saw enter the stockade a quarter of an hour ago, should have been taken prisoner yesterday by David, whom he had formerly known in Lexington, then escaped and came straight here to me?"

"Wonderful strange!" said Billy Smith, who was listening with all his ears; "but, Miss Jenny, don't go away from us?"

"She thinks that she saw David on the edge of the forest a while ago," put in Mrs. M'Neil, "and, captain, unless you watch sharp, she'll be trying to join him."

"If she could do it without incurring danger, I would not place a straw in her way," returned Knox. "But the Indians are prowling all around us, and their

leader, who is no other than Count von Meyer, has offered a large reward to him who captures Jenny, and so you may be sure that I'll not let her out of my sight."

"I quite agree with you," spoke Harry; "even a flag of truce would be no protection; the villain who is on her track would scruple at nothing."

"Well now, considering how things stand," said Mrs. M'Neil, "I'll tell you what I'm going to do; I'm going to remain here in Fort Edward with the two girls, until General Schuyler has driven the Indians out of the province and captured Quebec. By that time winter will be setting in, the hard fighting over for awhile, and I'll work it so that David may join us and you too, Mr. Smith, and you too, Harry M'Crea, and all our weddings can be celebrated together."

This idea met with loud approval except from Jane, whose eyes were again turned in the direction of the forest; the crimson on her cheek had deepened and Knox fancied that she was trembling. In a low, but earnest tone he now reminded her that when David Jones had bade her farewell in April, she had consented that he should be her guardian, "and to the very end I will do my duty," he said, "so, dear Jenny, calm yourself; I am sure if your betrothed knew that you were here, he would beg me to keep you safe within the fort. Brave as he and his cavalymen may be, what could they do against thousands of savage Iroquois, all anxious to capture you?" With this Knox left the room, and for the next half hour the widow and Billy Smith remained by the window vainly endeavoring to engage the girl in conversation. But she would not open her lips, and this sorely distressed poor Billy, who loved her from the bottom of his heart, and he whispered to Mrs. M'Neil that he believed something dreadful was going to happen: "I know it," he said, "and yet I can't tell you why; I believe that an evil spirit is working against poor Jenny."

At length, he withdrew to a corner of the room, and

there lying down tried to get some repose; which he greatly needed, for the last few nights had been wakeful ones. The widow and the others followed his example, gradually the voices from the parade ground died away, and at length all fell asleep except Jane M'Crea and the sentinels.

And so an hour passed, the sun was near the horizon, when the girl left her seat by the window, and softly approaching her friends, eyed them attentively for about a minute. "They are all in the land of dreams," she said, "perhaps Aaron is too; now is my opportunity. To remain in this desolate fort waiting for happier days, before joining my betrothed, would be more than I could endure. He might be killed, he might be wounded and longing to have me near him, and I should not hear of it for months; no, I'll brave the warning voice which bids me stay; I'll go; God's will be done."

With this she glided noiselessly out of the room, and was about to descend the staircase, at the foot of which was a door leading out to a point nearly opposite the sally-port, when she stopped and held her breath. Reclining on the lowest step was Knox, his head pillowed on his arm; his eyes seemed to be closed. "Is he asleep?" thought Jane, as with throbbing heart she listened to his breathing: "If he discovers me he'll guess at once my purpose, and I know him well enough to believe that he would keep me here by force." And so she watched him a little to make sure, then cautiously descended, saying to herself, "he, too, is in the land of dreams." Yes, Knox was asleep and Jane had already gone by him, when she again stopped, and taking a scissors from her pocket, cut off one of her curls, then let it fall upon his breast. To open the door and glide out to the postern-gate was but the work of another moment; then picking up a bucket which she found there, she easily persuaded the sentry to let her go for some water to a spring which was not more than thirty paces distant. And as she went her heart beat quicker; the scout had told her that the

British troopers were encamped at Sandy Hill, scarcely a mile away; "I believe I can get to them without being overtaken," she said, "and yet something warns me that I am rushing to my doom, but I must go." Presently, she reached the fountain, then bending down as if to fill the bucket, glanced back with anxious eye at the sally-port; all was quiet, Aaron was evidently still asleep, the soldier on guard suspected nothing. In another moment she was hastening with all speed towards the forest, which she soon reached and just at the spot where the scout had told her ran a path leading to Sandy Hill. In her excitement she did not give a thought to the dangers which might surround her in the dark wilderness of pines that she was entering; along the narrow way she went with quick, agile steps, drawn on, it really seemed, by an invisible power. At length she came to an opening in the forest where the path branched off to the right and left of a gentle hill, at the foot of which stood a tall and venerable pine, stripped by the blasts of many winters of all its limbs but two, and on one of these sat an eagle. Her eyes rested a moment on the bird, whose glossy plumes were bathed in the rays of the setting sun, and while she was looking at it, it suddenly uttered a scream and flew away. At the same instant she was startled by the sound of voices approaching.

"Is it David?" she cried. Then louder still she raised her voice. "David! David!" But the words had hardly escaped her when the bright flush of her cheek changed to the pallor of death.

"This is better than I could have hoped," Count von Meyer exclaimed to himself, riding up with an expression upon his face which she knew sealed her fate. "You are welcome, fair Jane M'Crea," he said aloud, dismounting and approaching her. "You are kind to meet me here at last," and in the bitter mockery of his words was something even more horrible than his former brutality. "I told you when we first met that I would follow you; that my day would come. Have I not proved a constant lover? Nay, do not look

around so wildly; there is no one coming; you are alone with me and these Indians."

"Alone!" returned Jane, making a superhuman effort to calm herself. "Alone! No, God is near me, I need not tremble. Death is but a pang, there is a happier world than this."

"But, silly girl, who talks of death? Consent to my wishes and live. I hold you in my power. And your boy-lover"—this he spoke with a scornful laugh, which made the blood curdle in her veins—"is better off singing sentimental rhymes to the moon than under the hatchets of my braves." Then as a panther might watch its prey, he stared boldly into her eyes, which at the mention of her betrothed had lost their fixed look, and seemed now to be gazing far beyond him with an expression of indescribable tenderness. "Oh, David! My own one!" she murmured softly. "Oh, dearest, truest lover!" Then as if the bitterness of his anguish when he should hear of her fate had suddenly flooded her yearning heart, she wrung her hands, and with dilated eyes and quivering lips, again looked wildly about her, as if escape might yet be possible. But the count, who was watching her with folded arms, moved as she moved, keeping ever in front of her.

"Come, come," he exclaimed, seeing her calmness broken, "we have had enough of this. After all, life has its charms, and death at this moment would ill suit your vigorous youth. The world is very beautiful, and it has much happiness in store for you."

As he spoke she glanced at the Iroquois, who were glaring at her through the shadows; the horror of her situation seemed to burst upon her with tenfold power, and her fresh young life shrank from the cruel death. The count, exulting in this momentary weakness, and believing his battle as good as won, advanced a step nearer with an air of triumph which instantly aroused to arms her glorious spirit, and springing from him with flashing eyes, she extended her arms towards the savages, crying out, "come death! come death!"

At once the count made a sign to one of them, and as he advanced, Jane knelt down and breathed her last prayer, and so resigned was she to her fate that the Indian, as he lifted his weapon, said, "the pale-face girl is brave." Not a shriek, nor a moan was heard when the tomahawk cleft her skull, then while the body was quivering in death, the scalping-knife began its part of the bloody work. But Count von Meyer had already turned his steed away, and followed by three of the savages, was riding off to join the main body of the Iroquois, who were to rendezvous that night about three miles north of Fort Edward.

A few minutes later, just as the eagle had flown back to the pine tree, and while the Indian was gliding off with the scalp, three horsemen galloped up; but before we say who they are, let us return to Aaron Knox. To describe his feelings when Ben Briggs roused him out of his sleep to tell him of Jane M'Crea's flight, would be impossible, and Billy Smith, who happened at that moment to be coming down the staircase, realized as vividly as his captain did the peril which the girl had placed herself in. Not one of them waited for orders, but mounting three horses belonging to the scouts, set off at full speed in pursuit.

"Pray God," said Knox as they entered the forest, "that Jenny may find her way to the British cavalry." "Not much chance for her if she doesn't," returned Briggs, "the Iroquois I know are on the lookout, and they'll not make her a prisoner; her scalp is worth too much."

"Well, we ought to overtake her afore long," said Billy Smith, just as they reached the opening among the pines." "Yes, if she followed this trail," said Knox. "And yonder she is—and finished too, by God!" exclaimed Ben Briggs pointing to an object lying on the ground ahead of them.

"Where? where?" cried Knox, who although he saw something at the foot of the pine tree, could not realize all at once the ghastly truth.

The scene which followed tried even the scout's

rough nature, hardened as it was to border warfare, and down his weather-beaten cheeks the tears flowed. Aaron, like one stricken to the heart, threw himself upon the body, and there as still and motionless he lay as the inanimate form which he embraced. But the grief of Billy Smith took a different turn. He was no less profoundly moved than his companions, yet he shed not a tear. Over his face came a look of frenzy; his eyes glared like the eyes of a panther. You would not have taken him for the same man, so sudden was the change. Quick into the saddle he sprang again, then without waiting to see if his friends followed him, he galloped off into the forest, crying out, "I see their tracks! Vengeance! Vengeance!"

Count von Meyer and the Indians were proceeding leisurely across an open piece of ground, dreaming of anything but danger, when the pursuer came in sight of them. "Four against one!" shouted Billy Smith as he drove the spurs deeper into his horse's flanks. "But what if 'twas a thousand to one? Vengeance! Vengeance!" And on he dashed. In another half minute and without drawing rein he rose in his stirrups, ran his eye along his rifle and fired. Quick as the report of the piece, the Hessian tossed his arms into the air, then turning half round with a yell which was horrible to hear—there was something unearthly in it—he swayed to and fro a moment, then fell off his steed dead.

Satisfied with what he had accomplished, Billy Smith might now have retreated, but he was like one possessed; on, on he galloped to the astonishment of the Iroquois who were already covering him with their rifles. When he got to within twenty paces of them they fired. "Never mind!" he cried, while the blood gushed from his breast, "vengeance, vengeance!" Then with a last convulsive effort he grasped his fire-lock by the muzzle and with a terrific blow dashed out the brains of the nearest savage. But in another moment the gun dropped from his hands and down he rolled on top of Count von Meyer, whose throat he tore

in his death agony, and his fingers still retained their grip when by-and-by Colonel Brewer's regiment came up and discovered the bodies.

* * * * *

Here we might lay our pen aside, for the story of Jane M'Crea is told ; but lest the end appear too abrupt let us say a few words more.

When David Jones heard of the sad fate of his betrothed, he became desperate and careless of life, and in the attack on Quebec a few weeks later, rushed into the thickest of the fight and was slain in the narrow street called Sault au Matelot, by the soldiers of Benedict Arnold, who had entered the city in that quarter.

The widow M'Neil passed the rest of her days with her relative on his farm near Fort Edward, cherishing to the last Billy Smith's battered hat, and reading over and over again the old Bible which he had given her. She died at a ripe age and was buried in the village cemetery close by the ruins of the fort.

Harry M'Crea, after serving three years in the Continental army, was at length disabled by the loss of a leg. But this did not prevent him from hobbling along through life very happily on a wooden one, for Helen Jones made him the best of wives, and before the century closed he became one of the richest settlers of the Mohawk Valley.

Aaron Knox served with distinction through the whole war, nor did he receive a single wound although he was in many battles, and when peace was declared, he took up his abode with Harry. For miles around he was known as a person of deep religious feeling, yet somewhat eccentric ; and on a certain day of every year, he would wander off by himself to a lonely mound on the banks of the Hudson, about three miles below Fort Edward, and there remain for hours and hours, not uttering a word nor raising his eyes off the sod. He also carried with him wherever he went, a long and glossy curl, which drew many a whisper and curious remark from those who caught a glimpse of it ; and 'tis related that when once a fanatic minister of the gospel

ventured to remonstrate with him for clinging with such devotion to this relic of poor mortality, Aaron, with a look of unutterable scorn, replied, "There is more prayer in this lock of hair, than in all the sermons you ever preached."

In the summer of 1826, the body of Jane M'Crea was taken up and deposited in the same graveyard with Mrs. M'Neil. Hundreds of young men and maidens assembled on that occasion, to strew with flowers her tomb and hear from the lips of the eloquent Hooper Cummings, of Albany, an address in which he recalled to their minds, in words they never forgot, the dark and trying days of the Revolution, and held up to them as an example of courage and virtue, she who had been known among those who knew her best, as the Pride of Lexington.

On the brink of the grave stood an old man with long, white beard, and face marked by silent grief. Aaron Knox was not weeping, nor did he seem to be listening to the panegyric: a quaint and solemn figure, he stood with many a curious eye fastened upon him, and one maiden, who was particularly struck by his appearance, turned to her sweetheart and whispered, "Whoever he is, we might call him the Ancient."

THE END.

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